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ABSTRACT

The Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources met to hear two panels of witnesses discuss improving educational opportunities for low-income children, including provisions of Senate 847, to provide scholarship assistance for District of Columbia elementary and secondary school students. Opening remarks by Senators Coats, Lieberman, Reed, and Hutchinson set the stage for the discussion of educational improvement for low-income children and a discussion of school choice for urban students. The first panel of four witnesses included Howard Fuller (Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University), Pam Ballard (mother of urban students), Alieze Stallworth (teacher in the District of Columbia schools and parent), and Barbara S. Lewis (representative of a group supporting school choice and urban parent). With the exception of Ms. Stallworth, these panelists supported various forms of choice for urban schools. Ms. Stallworth argued that the issue was one of excellence in education for all students. The second panel included Glenn Lewis (State representative from Texas), Alex Molnar (professor of education), Paul Perseon (college professor), Zakiya Courtney (Parents for School Choice), and Dolores Fridge (Minnesota State Commissioner of Human Rights). These panelists discussed school choice programs currently operating. The prepared statements of panelists and supplemental materials are included. (SLD)

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ED 417 239

S. HRG. 105-143

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

EXAMINING PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN, INCLUDING PROVISIONS OF S. 847, TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

JULY 29, 1997

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

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CONTENTS

STATEMENTS

TUESDAY, JULY 29, 1997

	Page
Coats, Hon. Dan, a U.S. Senator from the State of Indiana, opening statement	1
Lieberman, Hon. Joseph I., a U.S. Senator from the State of Connecticut, opening statement	3
Reed, Hon. Jack, a U.S. Senator from the State of Rhode Island, opening statement	5
Hutchinson, Hon. Tim, a U.S. Senator from the State of Arkansas, opening statement	6
Fuller, Howard, director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI; Pam Ballard, parent, Cleveland, OH; Alieze Stallworth, on behalf of the District of Columbia Congress of Parents and Teachers, Washington, DC; and Barbara S. Lewis, president, Families Organized for Real Choice in Education, Indianapolis, IN	6
Prepared statements of:	
Mr. Fuller	8
Ms. Ballard	11
Ms. Stallworth	15
Ms. Lewis	21
Jeffords, Hon. James M., Chairman, Committee on Labor and Human Resources, opening statement	30
Lewis, Glenn, State representative, Fort Worth, TX; Alex Molnar, professor of education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI; Paul Peterson, professor, Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA; and Zakiya Courtney, director, Parents for School Choice, Milwaukee, WI; and Dolores Fridge, commissioner, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, St. Paul, MN	43
Prepared statements of:	
Mr. Lewis	45
Mr. Molnar	48
Mr. Peterson	59
Ms. Courtney	66
Ms. Fridge	71
Americans For Choice In Education, Paul Mecklenborg, president, prepared statement	87
Agudath Israel of America, David Zwiebel, director of goverbment affairs and general counsel, prepared statement	88
Catholic Alliance, Keith A. Fournier, Esq., president, prepared statement	91

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

TUESDAY, JULY 29, 1997

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD–430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senators Jeffords, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Jeffords, Coats, Hutchinson, Murray, Reed, Lieberman, and Hutchison.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COATS

Senator COATS [presiding]. Good morning. The subcommittee on Children and Families will come to order, and the hearing will commence.

I am going to be brief in my opening remarks, as I am looking forward to hearing from our two panels of distinguished witnesses.

First let me welcome all of you here. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to address what I believe is one of the most important domestic issues of our time.

Senator Kennedy had intended to be here, as had a number of our colleagues on both the Democrat and Republican sides. However, as you may know, with the unfortunate passing of former Justice Brennan, a memorial service is taking place this morning at 10 o'clock in downtown Washington, and so some of the work of the Senate has been suspended, and a number of Members have obligations and a desire to attend that memorial service. I hope you do not take the lower than normal attendance here today as an indication of lack of interest in this subject. There is great interest in the subject, and our timing was unfortunate.

We did not feel it was appropriate to postpone the hearing since our witnesses flew in from different parts of the country last night, dodged thunderstorms to get here and, given a frantic schedule to finish both the tax bill and the balanced budget bill this week, we really were not able to find a suitable time to reschedule this hearing.

I do want to thank my colleague, Senator Hutchinson, who has shown a very keen interest in this subject, and my partner in crime here, Senator Lieberman, who has joined me over the last several years in promoting various proposals dealing with school choice, and I thank him for being present here today.

We are here to discuss a very serious problem. In cities throughout this country, our public schools are no longer offering a quality education in a safe environment for our children. Instead, many of those children are compelled to attend schools that are doing nothing to prepare them for a promising future and may actually put their lives at risk on a daily basis.

The seriousness of this situation cannot be overstated. Those of you who have studied or worked in the system understand the tragic impact of this situation on families and children. In many cities, we now have a public school system that routinely denies educational opportunities to those students who are most in need of those educational opportunities. The system fails to challenge them in their school work and insults their dignity by passing them year after year, allowing them to arrive at graduation day unable to fully participate in the work force or go on to further education.

The situation is even more dire because not only are many children grossly undereducated; they often see and experience violence during their school day that many of us cannot imagine. It is safe to say that if this were the educational environment being offered to students in the suburbs, the educational reform movement would look more like a revolution.

Against this backdrop, there is virtually no argument now over whether urban education has really failed. We no longer ask ourselves is there something wrong, but rather, left, right and center, are asking: What are we going to do to fix an obvious problem that is getting worse every year?

In response to this question, we have convened this hearing. During the last 30 years, numerous reforms have been proposed, yet despite well-motivated and even well-funded efforts, the desperate plight of our inner-city schools continues to worsen.

We are here today to look at one of the most intriguing and controversial reforms—school choice. As many of you are aware, the concept of school choice has been debated for some time but has only recently begun to gain any real momentum and serious consideration in the education reform debate.

Today we will be looking at what is happening around the country concerning school choice programs. We have among our witnesses today three important but very different types of experts who can speak directly to this growing local movement which seeks to empower families in the inner city.

It is a fact that this is a growing local movement, for this issue is no longer merely the subject of education reform conferences, but has achieved a popular momentum among the very people it would benefit. School choice is anything but an elitist issue these days. Recent studies, such as the one conducted by the liberal Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies finds that minority support for public-funded scholarships has increased to 65 percent for Hispanics and 55 percent for African Americans.

One of the best indicators of the strength of local support for increased educational opportunities for children is the privately-funded scholarship programs that have sprung up all over the country since 1991. These private scholarship programs have made a tremendous contribution to the futures of over 13,000 low-income children in just the last 6 years.

The two publicly-funded scholarship programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland are very popular in the communities which benefit the most from these programs. For example, in Milwaukee, surveys indicate that 95 percent of African Americans support scholarships for low-income children.

The overwhelming need of so many inner-city students for safe and effective schools has shifted the moral burden of proof to those who insist on the coercive assignment of poor children to failed schools. Even the most optimistic reformers of urban public education admit that progress will only be measured in decades, leaving an entire generation of young people languishing in the hopeless educational status quo.

In the meantime, opponents of school choices are saying in effect that the loss of a generation of students is unavoidable. I cannot disagree more strongly. School choice offers a solution to parents now. it does not assume that we lose another generation of students, but rather that a high-quality, safe education should be available to all students immediately.

I fully expect there to be disagreement on the types of reform that should be implemented, but the one common goal that we should be able to pledge ourselves to is that our children's future is of paramount concern, and this preeminent concern for children must take precedence over the continuation of any particular system of education.

The system is there to serve the children; the children are not there to continue to maintain a system which by all measures is failing those students. We must reorder our priorities.

Today, let us endeavor to put partisan bickering aside and truly discuss how we can immediately respond to the concerns of parents who actually fear for the safety of their children in the public schools, who are distressed that their children are not receiving an adequate public education, but have no other alternatives.

I would like to ask my colleague Senator Lieberman if he has any opening statement to make.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LIEBERMAN

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to members of the committee, Senator Hutchinson, Senator Reed.

I appreciate very much your leadership in this and so many other good causes, and I am honored to be your cosponsor on some of the school choice legislation that has been introduced.

I am going to stay for a while, and I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to come here for a kind of "therapy" before I go on to the campaign finance investigation at 10 o'clock—something elevating in my day here at the beginning.

So if I may briefly simply say "amen" to what you have said, this is a very important hearing today in what seems like the long march to adopt school choice scholarship programs around the country. After all, education is at the heart of our hopes for our children, for our country, for our culture, and our education system is simply not working for millions of our children today.

The question is what are we going to do about it. A lot of us started out in the school choice movement in an attempt to create some choices for parents, but also to create some competition for

the public school system, which always will be the center of our efforts to educate the overwhelming majority of our children. As time has gone on, I think we have become familiar with the quality of our schools in so many of our poor areas, whether it is in the District of Columbia, or Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven in Connecticut—Hartford, where the schools have been taken over by the State, in a way somewhat comparable to the takeover of the school system and the Government here in Washington by the Control Board—and we have seen that this is not only an attempt to create some alternatives and competition and see if we can learn from the successes that are going on outside the public school area in educating poor children, but the school choice scholarships are a lifeline for kinds who are trapped today in schools that are unsafe and are simply not teaching them—they are a force for regression in their own lives.

We have devoted enormous energy and enormous amounts of money to trying to improve the public schools, both the quality of the buildings, the safety of the schools and, most important of all, the quality of the education going on there. But that is a long-term effort, sadly, and in the meantime, what about the millions of our children who are trapped in schools that are simply not educating them? What about their futures? What about their hopes? What about our hopes as a society for them?

That is why I say the school choice scholarship program today has become not merely a source of innovation in the school system, but it is a lifeline for a lot of kids whose lives will otherwise be seriously damaged and hampered while we are trying to improve the public schools where they are being educated today.

Too often here in Washington, this effort has been seen as either between Republicans and Democrats, or between religious conservatives and teachers' unions. I am here to say that there are Democrats on the choice side, too. But what is more important, Mr. Chairman, about the hearing and the witnesses that you have brought here to Washington today is that they make the point that you have made in your opening statement. As so often happens in our country, Washington is going to be led by the people, by what is happening in the States, not vice versa.

What is happening in the States is that parents are demanding a better way for their kids, and for now, in the short term, these school choice scholarships are that better way. So you have brought them here; you have shown us that there is a human face out there, that we are not alone, that this is not just a battle among interest groups here in Washington. There is a lot at stake for the public.

We know that here in Washington. There was a fascinating poll a while ago that showed strong support for school choice scholarships, but what was fascinating to me was that the poorer the respondents to the poll were, the more their kids were in the public schools, the more they wanted the school choice scholarship option. Ironically, the opposition to the proposal came mostly from people in the District who were better off and whose kids were not in the public school. Too often, I find this. Ideologically, intellectually, people fight this idea, but too often, the people fighting the idea do not have their kids in the public schools.

So we are going to keep battling this, and those of you out beyond the Beltway are going to push us to do it. Senator Coats and I have had several bills in on this subject. This year, we were privileged to have one of our national school choice demonstration projects included as part of S. 1, the Republican leadership education bill. And in this, we are just saying, hey, maybe we are wrong, but is anybody going to feel so self-satisfied about the state of our public schools today and the quality of our children's education that we are not going to be willing to at least experiment with this idea? And in our proposal, we have a very intensive, independent review of how it works.

I mean, let us not be defensive, folks. This is a crisis involving millions of our kids and their future. Let us try it.

And the second proposal that will be part of this year is to focus in on the District of Columbia, our Nation's Capital, and offer an amendment which will provide at least 2,000 kids here every year with a school choice scholarship so they can make a choice.

So Mr. Chairman, thank you for your great leadership on this, and thanks to those who have come from across America to tell us and Congress generally that this is an idea whose time has come. Why? Because our children's future demands it.

Thanks very much.

Senator COATS. Senator Lieberman, thank you. I just want to let you know that should you need a break from your next assignment at the campaign finance hearings, you are welcome back any time. We will be here for a couple of hours, and we will save a seat for you.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you. I hope I can come back.

Senator COATS. Senator Reed, do you have a statement?

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR REED

Senator REED. Mr. Chairman, I will just say that I am pleased that you are holding this hearing. We all share a common hope that, through our efforts, we can improve public education. I think we have different views of how we can carry out that great aspiration.

There are movements in every community now with Goals 2000 to try to improve public education, providing opportunities to give local stakeholders a chance to come together and look at public education. The concern that many have about voucher programs is that they would take from the Federal level and even from the State level the limited resources necessary to truly fix public education and would allow some students to leave the public system without making the public system better.

So I am very eager to listen to the testimony today, and I commend you for having the hearing. This is an important topic, and I think Senator Lieberman's comments and your comments express the sense of the people, a great frustration and a yearning for fundamental change; and if that is not satisfied in some way, I think we will have a decline in support for public education, which would ultimately seriously harm its standing in the community.

So I thank you for the hearing.

Senator COATS. I thank you and appreciate your participation this morning.

Senator Hutchinson has indicated to me that he does not have an opening statement, but in reflection, perhaps you would like to say a few words.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HUTCHINSON

Senator HUTCHINSON. I will only say thank you for calling the hearing, and I will add my "amen" also to what you have said and what Senator Lieberman has said.

I have long been convinced of the value of school choice programs. I think that as we hear the testimony today, there will be some interesting questions as to what the proper Federal role might be.

I think it is clear as we look at educational experience in this country that there is very little relationship to the amount of money we are spending and what the educational product and the test scores might be, and that the greatest things we can do to help the public schools is to give them the proper competition and give parents the optimum choices. That I think is the goal of this hearing today, and I look forward to the testimony and again thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Senator COATS. Thank you.

With that, we will now call our first panel to the table. This panel is represented by Dr. Howard Fuller, who is director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI; Pam Ballard, a parent from Cleveland, OH; Alieze Stallworth, on behalf of the District of Columbia Congress of Parents and Teachers, from Washington, DC; and Barbara Lewis, head of Families Organized for Real Choice in Education, from Indianapolis, IN.

We welcome all of our witnesses. We would ask you to summarize your remarks. Your full statements have been provided to us. I had the privilege of reading those statements yesterday, and your entire statement will be made part of our official record. To the extent that you can hit the highlights in your testimony, that will leave us more time for questions and discussion of this issue.

We will start with Dr. Fuller and go right down the line. Dr. Fuller, welcome, and thank you for participation.

STATEMENTS OF HOWARD FULLER, DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF LEARNING, MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, MILWAUKEE, WI; PAM BALLARD, PARENT, CLEVELAND, OH; ALIEZE STALLWORTH, ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS, WASHINGTON, DC; AND BARBARA S. LEWIS, PRESIDENT, FAMILIES ORGANIZED FOR REAL CHOICE IN EDUCATION, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Mr. FULLER. Senator Coats and other members of the committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on issue related to improving educational opportunities for low-income children.

I will take your advice and try to summarize my statement, and the main points I would like to make are the following.

No. 1, I think the issue is not the destruction of public education. The issue is how is it that we ensure that all of our children have the possibilities of learning. And in pursuing that objective, it is my

opinion that we have got to pursue a dual strategy. We have got to work hard to make changes within the existing system, and at the same time, we must pursue alternative strategies outside the existing system. And I think that included in these outside-the-system strategies should be a program that provides publicly-financed scholarships to poor students.

And although there must continue to be strong support for public education, it is in the final analysis not the system that is important; it is the students and their families who must be primary. We must ask the question what is in the best interests of the children, not what is in the best interests of the system. And in my professional opinion, the interests of poor students are best served if they are truly given choice which permits them to pursue a variety of successful options, public and private.

I want poor black parents, poor parents of all color, for that matter, to have the same options for their children that those of us with money have. I always find it interesting that people who have taken care of their children stand so adamantly against giving poor parents the same opportunity to take care of theirs.

So I would summarize my statements with five points.

No. 1, for almost 20 years, I have struggled in various ways to improve learning opportunities for poor children. My support for choice is a continuation of that struggle.

No. 2, I do not support any type of choice program that would increase the competitive advantage of individuals who already have resources.

No. 3, my support for choice is aimed at helping to create an environment of change both within and outside of the existing system. I want to see improvement across the entire spectrum of learning opportunities for poor children. I do not want to destroy the public segments of those environments. I do, however, want to empower poor parents to give them the capacity to influence the direction of change that is needed.

No. 4, education is inextricably linked to a person's ability to function as a responsible, independent citizen; yet for many children, particularly poor children of color, a quality education remains a distant dream. If we believe in the fundamental American premise of equal opportunity, we must offer poor children the chance to have the best possible learning opportunities—a chance most of us take for granted for our own children.

And number five, more than any other community in the country, Milwaukee is experimenting with the kind of system that Dr. Kenneth Clark envisioned, as I talk about in my full statement. Thousands of low-income children are attending schools of their choice because of private scholarships and publicly-funded vouchers. Within the last year, researchers from Harvard, Houston University and Princeton have identified substantial gains in the academic achievement for students who have stayed in the program for at least 3 years.

Parents are satisfied. Some local officials say the program has been a "wake-up call" to them. This is the type of public school reform that I think will make a difference for our poorest children.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Senator COATS. Dr. Fuller, thank you. We look forward to discussing this issue with you during the question session.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fuller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. HOWARD FULLER

Senator Coats: Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on issues related to improving educational opportunities for low-income children.

I am and always will be a strong supporter of public education. However, I believe our public education systems must change. In promoting change we should heed the advice Dr. Kenneth Clark gave to us more than 27 years ago. He said, "public education need not be identified with the present system of organization . . . Public education can be . . . defined in terms of a . . . system which is in the public interest." For more than 14 years, prior to becoming the Superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools in June of 1991, I was a consistent and constructive critic of that system's discriminatory practices against poor Black children—practices that had the collective impact of miseducating and under educating literally thousands of our children. I gain no solace from the fact that in spite of the hard work and good intentions of thousands of dedicated educators the system continues not to work for a significant percentage of Milwaukee's poor non white children.

Based on my observations and visits to a variety of school systems in this country I do not believe that the Milwaukee's system is unique. There are far too many school districts serving our poorest children, a disproportionate number of whom are nonwhite, that are failing to educate the majority of those children. It is crucial for the sake of these children that fundamental and radical changes be implemented. I believe a two-pronged strategy is warranted. There must be efforts to change the system from within. There must at the same time be a pursuit of alternative strategies outside of the existing system. Included in the "outside of the system" strategies should be a program that provides public financed scholarships to the poorest students.

Although there must continue to be strong support for public education, in the final analysis, it is not the system that is important, it is the students and their families that must be primary. We must ask the question, "What is in the best interest of the children?" not "What is in the best interest of the system?" In my professional opinion, the interest of poor students are best served if they are truly given choice which permits them to pursue a variety of successful options, public and private.

I want poor black parents—poor parents of all colors, for that matter—to have the same options for their children that those of us with money have. Why should poor parents be told to remain in schools that do not woW and then be told that if we give them the resources to leave, it might destroy the system? Again, I raise the question, what is the major concern here, the students and their parents or the system?

I believe the educational systems in this country are essentially organized to meet the needs and protect the interests of those who woW in these systems, not the needs and interests of the children and families the systems are supposed to serve. For the sake of our children, WE MUST CHANGE!!!

As we look to the next century, we must develop ways to ensure that all of our kids can learn anything, anytime, anyplace. So our structures, curriculums, teaching and learning processes, and our funding mechanisms must help prepare our kids for that kind of reality.

During my four year tenure as Superintendent, I supported a whole range of ideas and concepts aimed at improving learning opportunities for all of our children—including charter schools, the flexibility to close down failing schools, public/private partnerships, rigorous curriculum standards, innovative schools from within, decentralization, and site-based budgeting. I found hundreds of administrators, teachers, and support staff in the Milwaukee Public Schools who supported these ideas. They believe, as I do that the system must be transformed radically if all of our children are to be effectively educated.

Educational systems we have in this country will not achieve this mission if the current configuration of power is allowed to remain in tact. I believe these systems remain fundamentally mired in the status quo. Powerful forces conspire to protect careers, contracts, and current practices before tending to the interests of our children. I firmly believe, based on my study and experience, that parental choice which will be made possible by the type of scholarship program being proposed is an important tool to aid in the effort to change the current situation. I believe choice is

a key element in the quest for the alternative strategies I mentioned earlier in my remarks. Again, Dr. Kenneth Clark spoke to this very point when he stated:

Alternatives—realistic, aggressive, and viable competitors—to the present public school systems must be found. The development of such competitive public school systems will be attacked by the defenders of the present system as attempts to weaken the present system and thereby weaken, if not destroy, public education. This type of expected self-serving argument can be briefly and accurately disposed of by asserting and demonstrating that truly effective competition strengthens rather than weakens that which deserves to survive. Given this definition, it becomes clear that an inefficient system of public systems is not in the public interest:

—a system of public schools which destroys rather than develops positive human potentialities is not in the public interest.

—a system which consumes funds without demonstrating effective returns is not in the public interest;

—a system which insists that its standards of performance should not or cannot be judged by those who must pay the cost is not in the public interest;

—a system which says the public has no competence to assert that a patently defective product is a sign of the system's inefficiency and demand radical reform is not in the public interest;

—a system which blames its human resources and its society while it quietly acquiesces in, and inadvertently perpetuates, the very injustices which it claims limit its efficiency is not in the public interest.

It is within this general context then that I support choice for poor parents. I realize that there are many people who have philosophical and for political differences with this concept. But, for me it is a very crucial part of the overall effort to radically transform learning opportunities for poor kids.

In closing I want to make five points:

1. For almost 20 years I have struggled in various ways to improve learning opportunities for poor children. My support for choice is a continuation of that struggle.

2. I do not support any type of choice program that would increase the competitive advantage of individuals who already have resources.

3. My support for choice is aimed at helping to create an environment of change both within and outside of the existing system. I want to see improvement across the entire spectrum of learning opportunities for poor children. I do not want to destroy the public segments of those environments. I do, however, want to empower poor parents to give them the capacity to influence the direction of the change that is needed.

4. Education is inextricably linked to a person's ability to function as a responsible, independent citizen. Yet for many children, particularly poor children of color, a quality education remains a distant dream. We must, if we believe in the fundamental American premise of equal opportunity, offer poor children the chance to have the best possible learning opportunities—a chance most of us take for granted for our own children.

5. More than any other community in the country, Milwaukee is experimenting with the kind of system Dr. Kenneth Clark envisioned. Thousands of low income children are attending schools of their choice, because of private scholarships and publicly funded vouchers. Within the last year, researchers from Harvard, Houston university and Princeton have identified substantial gains in academic achievement for students who have stayed in the program at least three years. Parents are satisfied. Some local school officials say the program has been a "Wake up call" to them. This is the type of public school reform that will make a difference for our poorest children.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Senator COATS. Pam Ballard is from Cleveland, OH. Senator DeWine has a conflict this morning and sent his regrets; he has an interest in this subject but has, like all of us, three things going on at the same time. He told me to send his best wishes and thanks to you for your willingness to testify, Pam, and we look forward to your testimony.

Ms. BALLARD. Thank you.

I would like to say good morning to everyone. I am a single mother of four children, and I live to be a good mother. I am currently a county home day care provider.

I consider myself an undereducated high school graduate of the Cleveland public school system, and this is strongly why I am here. I know that my third-grader, whose name is Antonice, and she is 8, can pretty much read better than I can.

After being in the Cleveland public schools and having a child who attended Cleveland public schools, my daughter was listed a behavior problem. She was a "D" or "F" student in all subjects. Her grades in citizenship were horrible. She did not want to go to school. She had no interest in school, and she had no friends. She would cry uncontrollably while at school. The students would hit her, kick her and mistreat her.

My daughter has been to four different schools. The schools said that Antonice had a behavior problem and that she should be counseled. I told them that she was receiving counseling by a family minister, and they told me that that was not good enough.

I had all but given up on the Cleveland public school system. I felt the Cleveland school system had failed me and my child. I had hoped for many years to find a school in the system that would help improve my child for the better rather than for the worst.

Now I have two children in the scholarship and tutoring programs, a kindergartner and a third-grader. They attend Hope Central Academy. My daughters have made a big change. I feel their learning schools have improved, and they have prospered greatly.

My kindergartner started at Hope Central Academy on December 4, 1996, not knowing "A" to "Z". Now she knows her alphabet, can read and even do math, all within a few months' time.

My 8-year-old's behavior and grades are wonderful thanks to her teachers and her principal, whose wonderful teaching and guidance helped me get my daughter's behavior headed in the right direction in order for her to learn.

I really feel that Hope Central Academy was and is the role model for my children's future. I am very grateful for the progress that my children have made attending Hope Central Academy—all of this with the help of the Cleveland scholarship and tutoring program.

I wish lots of other scholarship and tutoring programs were available to children so that they, too, could see and make the difference by attending a private school. I wish everyone could know how beneficial the Cleveland scholarship and tutoring program is for children and families. Many cannot afford to send their children to private schools for financial and other reasons.

I prayed day in and day out for Antonice's life to change. Now I can truly say that both of my daughters' lives and futures have grown and advanced in a much healthier and happier way.

As a single parents, I thank Governor Voinovich, Ms. Holt, and Mr. Brennan, for giving the scholarship and tutoring program continued support. It makes a difference. I see that difference every time I watch my two daughters at play, studying, reading, and learning.

The scholarship and tutoring program opens up opportunities for the future of our children. We need this change. Please keep the scholarship and tutoring program alive. It is a beginning, and we

all need new beginnings. It has helped keep me and my daughters live.

All children need help. Thank you for giving me and my daughters that opportunity. And I thank God for programs like this.

The goal of private schools like Hope Central Academy is to serve the children, love them, teach them, and treat them respectfully. What makes the program work is the teachers and the students.

The only thing that needs to be changed about the program is to make it available for all students. We need more funds for scholarships and programs for our children all over the country. The scholarship and tutoring program opens up opportunities for the future of our children. We need a change in the Cleveland school system. The scholarship program is just the first step to the successful education of all students.

Once again, I would like to say that Hope Central Academy is and was my last hope.

Thank you.

Senator COATS. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ballard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAMELA BALLARD

I am a single mother of four children and I live to be a good mother. Currently I am a county home daycare provider.

I consider myself an undereducated high school graduate of the Cleveland public schools system. I know that because my third grade child within a year's time aster being in a private school reads better than I can.

Two of my children attended Cleveland public schools. One of my children, Antonice, age 8, while enrolled in public school was hit, kicked, punched and called names by other students. She was a "D" and "F" student in all subjects. Her grades in citizenship were horrible. She did not want to go to school, had no interest in school and did not have any friends. She would cry uncontrollably while at school.

The school said Antonice had a behavior problem and should be counseled. I told them she was receiving counseling from the family minister. The school said that was not good enough.

I had all but given up on the Cleveland public school system. I felt the Cleveland school system had failed me and my child. I'd hoped for many years to find a school in the system that would help improve my child. For the better rather than for the worse.

Now I have two children in the Cleveland scholarship and tutoring program. A kindergartner and a third grader. They attend Hope Central Academy School. My daughters have made big changes. I feel their learning skills have improved and prospered greatly. My kindergartner started Hope Central Academy December 4, 1996. Not knowing "A" to "Z". Now she knows her alphabet, can read and even do math—all within a few month's time!

My eight year old's behavior and grades are wonderful, thanks to her teachers and her principal, whose wonderful teaching and guidance, helped me get my daughter's behavior headed in the right direction. Because of them, she is learning now.

I really feel Hope Central Academy was and is the role model for my children's future. I am very grateful for the progress my children have made attending Hope Central Academy All this with the help of the Cleveland scholarship and tutoring program.

I wish lots of other scholarship and tutoring programs were available to children so that they, too could see—and make the difference—by attending a private school. I wish everyone could know how beneficial the Cleveland scholarship and tutoring program is for Cleveland children and families. Many cannot afford to send their children to private schools, for financial and other reasons.

Please, don't stop the funds for the Cleveland scholarship and tutoring program. Our children's and even their children's future will rely heavily on the support, confidence, and growth they receive given the chance to attend a private school through the scholarships and tutoring provided by the program.

I prayed day in and day out for Antonice's life to change. Now, I can truly say both my daughter's lives and futures have grown and advanced in a much healthier and happier way.

As a single parent I thank you Governor Voinovich, Mrs. Holt, and Mr. Brennan, for giving the scholarship and tutoring program continued support. It makes a difference. I have seen that difference. I can feel that difference in my heart every time I watch my two daughters at play, studying, reading, learning.

The scholarship and tutoring program opens up opportunities for the future of our children. We need this chance. Please keep the scholarship and tutoring program alive. It is a beginning and we all need new beginnings. It has helped keep me and my daughters alive. All children need help. Thank you for giving me and my daughters that opportunity. And I thank god for programs like this.

Plain Dealer
July 25, 1997

School voucher program to continue during appeal

PLAIN DEALER BUREAU

COLUMBUS — The Ohio Supreme Court yesterday allowed the Cleveland voucher program to continue in the coming school year while state officials appeal a lower-court ruling that declared it unconstitutional.

Without comment, the Supreme Court granted the state's motion for a stay while the case is appealed.

"We think that's an extremely positive development," said Gov. George V. Voinovich's spokesman, Michael Dawson.

The program, which gives poor parents publicly funded tuition vouchers to send their children to private and religious schools, was ruled unconstitutional in May by the 10th District Ohio Court of Appeals.

The court said the program violates the separation of church and state clauses in the U.S. and Ohio constitutions.

Senator COATS. Alieze Stallworth represents the District of Columbia Parent-Teachers Association and the National PTA. Alieze, we are pleased to have you here.

Ms. STALLWORTH. Thank you, Senator. I am a member of those organizations, but I am here today in my role as a parent. I have three children who attend DC. public schools who are being well-educated, contrary to popular belief. My daughter attends Coolidge Senior High School, not Banneker, where students received over $3 million in scholarships this year. There are schools in this city that are working.

My concern is for all children, that all children receive a quality education. That will not be achieved through voucher programs. The solution is not to throw a few crumbs to a society that needs help for all.

Sitting here today, I represent not the upper-income families who are privileged to send their children away and hope that 1 day the Senate will pass a tuition tax credit; nor am I poor enough to receive a voucher. I represent the majority of American whose children will remain in public schools—regardless of the programs that you all create, the majority of us and our children will be there.

I also look at the programs in the inner city as using children as experimental lab rates. I have watched and read lately about the failure of busing, the hoax behind magnet schools, where 500 spaces exist in Prince George's County that cannot be filled by black children. I have also read statistics and wonder why today why aren't the majority of those children using the vouchers in Cleveland black. Why aren't their parents present? To my knowledge, fewer than one-fourth of the parents in Cleveland who have taken advantage of this program are black.

I would like to see everyone sitting at the table, and for a fair conversation, I would also like to see the parents in the Milwaukee schools whose children, for whatever reason, are no longer using voucher scholarships but have returned to public schools, and those parents of children who were in the schools that have folded. I would like to see them be part of this conversation because the only way to have an honest question is not to have panels set up with three for and one against. I think we must have a fair, honest conversation coming from Capitol Hill.

And as I look at the articles in yesterday's and today's Times and see the panels, the one thing I have come to realize is that black people of America have come to symbolize to politicians what is wrong with our country. We are portrayed as poor and unable or unwilling to help ourselves, and therefore are brought out as the ones who need to have the most support. We are not the majority of the poor people in America; we are a small percentage. I think we need to talk about all of our children.

I do know that there are failures in the public schools, but that needs to be addressed through other programs. If everyone sitting in this room today believes that religious and private schools are more successful, we need to find out why. Is it because they have the opportunity that public schools do not have, to have smaller classroom size? The tighter our budget gets in the District of Columbia because of budget cuts in our education funding, the larger

our classes are. But we are still comparing our teachers with private school teachers. Our schools are being compared, when our teachers and students have a ratio of 35-to-one, to schools that have a ratio of 15-to-one.

Let us make it a fair playing field. The Federal Government needs to look at programs that link successful public and private schools and their staffs with low-performing public schools and offer them the opportunities and provide the funding for summer training institutes for the staff at those schools and year-around staff development. Those are the types of proposals that I would like to see coming out of Capitol Hill. Those are the types of programs I feel will support all of our children, not letting parents be satisfied that "me and mine" are being taken care of, because our job is to take care of all children. Our society is where it is today because all children are not being cared for. All undereducated children are not poor. They all need your help. The majority of these children need your help.

In the District of Columbia just recently, Congress did not fund $21 million, part of which would have gone to repair the buildings. They are struggling this summer in our school system to come up with funding just to fix the roofs. And I thank Senator Jeffords, who is sitting here this morning, for his efforts on our behalf to get our buildings repaired. That is the type of support we need.

We also have charter programs in our schools. DC. has a large number of choice programs operating currently in our schools. We do not need vouchers. We do not need programs that will continue to suck dollars away from our public schools. We need funding to assist us in fixing the buildings. If our teachers need more training, give us funding so we can offer the kind of training they need. And if our children need to be in smaller classrooms, help us provide that. Give them the funding they need for that.

Everything that is wrong with the system is not funding, but it does involve proper training of not only teachers, but of parents. We the parents need to be trained. We need to know what good work looks like, because when we are assuming that our children are getting A's and B's, and that that is good work, we may not always know that; but if we have the support from Capital Hill not to continue the destruction of public school education, which benefits all, and to support our efforts, the efforts of citizens who meet nightly and weekly in Washington, DC., who are not wealthy, who do have children attending schools in every ward in this city—and I have spoken to them from one side of the river to the other on the issue of vouchers—they all agree that we need to have support that will improve this school system for all children.

I thank you for having these conversations, and as I said, in the future, I would like to see a fairer, more honest conversation on the issue of vouchers.

Thank you.

Senator COATS. Thank you, Alieze.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Stallworth follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALIEZE STALLWORTH

Good Morning. I am Alieze Stallworth, an active member of the District of Columbia PTA, and a representative of the 6.5 million member National PTA. As a parent of three children in the District of Columbia public schools, I remain committed to

securing successes from our public education system. Like the many other PTA members, my goal is to ensure that a quality public education is available not only for my children, but all school-age children who attend public schools. Toward that end, the PTA believes that public money should not pay for vouchers that fail to lead to public school improvement and help a select few. Instead, tax revenues should finance public education that is accountable to the public, unlike non public schools.

Over a century ago, our society made a promise to its citizens to provide a quality public education to all children. We cannot renege on the commitment. That responsibility must not be abandoned by individual citizens nor policy makers. Granted, the task of maintaining a quality public education system may be difficult. The challenges confronting some public schools are varied and complex, commanding an even greater commitment on the part of parents, community leaders, and elected officials. This is our civic obligation.

Vouchers appear to be an easy answer, a simple solution, but in fact the reality is that sustaining a voucher program is both costly and administratively burdensome. Moreover, at the federal level every education program is underfunded. If our society does not adequately support the public school system, how can we afford to support two systems . . . a public and a private?

Lost in the voucher debate is the issue of what are America's public policy priorities for making public schools better. The money and political will expended to create, sustain, and expand voucher programs could be directed at improving public schools, yielding positive reforms, and spurring the likelihood of enhanced academic successes.

The focus of this hearing is on vouchers for low-income communities. I agree that low-income neighborhoods need sound solutions to fix the problems that some public schools confront. Vouchers, however, are not a sound solution. Vouchers fail to provide incentives for strengthening neighborhood public schools and neglect the real needs of public school students. Vouchers not only fail to contribute to the overall improvement of community public schools, but also encourage citizens and policy makers to abandon these important democratic institutions. In truth, voucher programs will hurt neighborhood public schools.

In fact, S. 847, the District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act, and its House companion bill, H.R. 1797, do nothing to help all students in the District's public schools. These bills provide about 2,000 vouchers, but there are 78,000 students in the District of Columbia public schools. Consequently, these measures forsake 76,000 students. What happens to those students left behind? Education reform can only succeed if all students benefit.

Similarly, voucher schemes on a national scale will serve a select few. There are about 46 million public school students in the United States. By the year 2006, a projected 3 million more students will enter the public education system. If Congress passes a private school voucher proposal, how many of these children will get a voucher? More importantly, how many children will not? Again, what happens to the vast majority of children who remain behind in schools that must operate with fewer funds and supplies? How do we help them? Vouchers do not provide the answers.

All this is not to ignore or minimize the problems that do exist. But claims that the District of Columbia is a wholly failed system are misleading and inaccurate. As you know, last November, the congressionally created District of Columbia Control Board put into place a Board of Trustees to oversee the District's public schools and appointed General Becton as chief executive officer. In April the General testified before a Senate committee and reported that of the 157 schools in the District, the Board of Trustees has identified 23 schools in need of help. This is fewer than one quarter of all the District of Columbia public schools.

The solution to making these poor schools better is finding solutions to fix the problems, not abandoning them by diverting tax dollars into vouchers for nonpublic schools. If student safety is a difficulty, then make the schools and the neighboring communities safe. If the schools lack computers and books, supply them. If teachers need additional training or families need support services, then schools should provide them. If building need repairs, then renovate them. Use the public schools where there are measurable successes as models for education reform initiatives in poor performing public schools.

Effective public schools require strong and sustained investment. Take the billions of dollars that would finance a private school voucher plan and use these resources to bring the deficient schools up to the same level as the good schools. Unfortunately, this is seldom the approach taken. For instance, when members of Congress were deliberating over the proposed voucher plan to the FY 1996 District of Columbia appropriations bill, Sen. Jeffords suggested that as a compromise the $5 million

dollars earmarked for District of Columbia vouchers be put into a fund to pay for much needed repairs to District of Columbia public school buildings. That recommendation was soundly rejected by voucher supporters who said that it is money for vouchers or nothing. Several months later, every local media outlet covered the story of how the courts refused to allow several "unsafe" District of Columbia public school buildings to open on time for the fall semester. Why would Congress refuse to put $5 million into public school repairs, but be willing to use that same money to send a few children to private and religious schools?

Likewise, last month, Congress rejected a plan to add to the emergency supplemental bill more than $21 million for public school repairs and the police force in the District of Columbia. On the same day, voucher supporters held a rally on the Capitol steps to announce the introduction of the District of Columbia voucher bill that would funnel $45 million of taxpayers' dollars into vouchers for private and religious schools.

Instead of benefiting private and religious schools, this $45 million could be used for infrastructure repairs, teacher training, smaller class sizes in the city's public schools. If we are to have pride in our Nation's capital, then one goal should be to ensure that every neighborhood District of Columbia public school provides youngsters with a high quality education.

The remedies will not always be simple, but success is achievable. Most Americans support public schooling and are willing to help bring about successes in their neighborhood public schools. Nationwide there is a growing resurgence of parent and community activism focused on enhancing the opportunities public schools provide students. Parents and concerned citizens are uniting to make good schools better and put the not-so-good schools on par with others. They know that the commitment is a long-term investment, not a short-term venture.

Last fall the National PTA and four other children's group commissioned a 1996 post-election survey of voters. Those polled showed enthusiasm for a number of education reform proposals. PTA believes these ideas are better than vouchers. They were most supportive of unpaid leave for families to attend parent-teacher conferences or doctors appointments, a ceiling on the number of students in classes, and an increase in the federal government's level of funding. They also wanted to see standards for the physical upkeep of schools, an investment in technology for our schools, and expanded funding of preschool programs.

Public school proponents realize that money is not the only answer. However, a critical factor of how well a school does is tied to the resources available. Moreover, how well students do is often reflective of the value that others place on school success. Most frequently, students gain the perspective on success from parents or other important adults in their lives. We as a society send messages to young people as well. What is the message elected officials and community leaders send to young people when they dismiss troubled public schools as so lacking in value that the only alternative is to help a few students escape to non public institutions? For the thousands of students who remain in those schools, the unspoken message is we do not value them or their education. Why should young people compete for academic success, when adults no longer strive to make the school, where these students spend the majority of their day, a priority?

Most Americans want government to maintain its commitment to providing youth with a quality public education, not divert limited public revenues into private and religious schools. Let's move on from the voucher debate, because the voucher issue is not about giving all families choices or improving or reforming public schools. Look at every voucher proposal ever introduced and the goal remains the same: getting the public to use tax dollars to finance private and religious schools. Vouchers are bad public policy for numerous reasons.

Another important aspect in this debate is that of local control. Accompanying federally imposed vouchers for the District of Columbia, or any other low-income community, is the erosion of the long-held tradition that the local community has control over education policy. District of Columbia residents have spoken out against vouchers. During the 104th Congress, the District of Columbia PTA worked in coalition with clergy, educators, and community activists to help keep a voucher proposal from being adopted as part of the FY 1996 District of Columbia appropriation bill. Several years ago, when the voucher issue went before the voters, the District's residents overwhelmingly defeated a voucher referendum. Imposing vouchers on the District residents does so against their will.

In June, at a press conference announcing the District of Columbia voucher bills, the provoucher supporters referenced a recent survey of 400 District of Columbia residents as proof there is widespread support for vouchers. Yet, the poll fails to ask the obvious question: would the survey respondents support or oppose vouchers? Instead, the pollsters told those being polled that there was a "school choice" plan and

then asked how this plan should be financed. They NEVER asked those being surveyed if they agreed or disagreed with the plan in the first place.

In addition, the survey shows that when asked what should be the top priority for improving the quality of education in the District of Columbia schools, 28 percent said teaching the basics, 20 percent said raising teacher pay, 19 percent wanted more money spent per pupil on instruction and materials, and 19 percent didn't know. A mere 11 percent said "allow parents to have more control over where their child attends school."

District of Columbia residents' aversion to vouchers is shared by the rest of the country. While vouchers is a much debated topic, most Americans continue to oppose them. No state has authorized an education voucher proposal. In those states where vouchers faced a public referendum or a vote in the state legislature, voucher plans failed: Last fall, over 65 percent of Washington State voters rejected a voucher ballot. In the United States, only two cities (Cleveland and Milwaukee) have adopted voucher plans. These proposals were passed by policy makers, not by ballot initiatives or referenda. Not only do these proposals lack full community support, but both plans remain entangled in court battles. Yet, vouchers for non public schools continue to be the centerpiece of nearly every recent federal education reform proposal. Why is the solution to helping public school students to put money into non public schools?

Throughout the country, as in the District, there are many good public schools doing an excellent job preparing youngsters for higher education and employment. Despite assertions to the contrary, numerous sources of data show that nationwide educational achievement has improved, particularly among minority students. Since the mid-1970s, student scores on the SAT and ACT continue to rise. These gains have occurred at the same time that student enrollment from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and from lower socio-economic backgrounds has increased. Further, high school students are taking more challenging courses, more students are graduating, and more students are enrolling in college. A May 1996 USA Today editorial stated that "tests show students are learning more. They're taking tougher courses. Fewer need remedial work. Even fewer are dropping out. And they're piling up medals in international competitions."

In this city, there are success stories as well. There are many parents who believe their children are getting a high quality education at the city's public elementary and secondary schools. In the District, numerous students are graduating with honors. For instance, District of Columbia public school students won awards in the international contest of Odyssey of the Mind. At my daughter's high school, students were awarded over $3 million in scholarship assistance to attend college. Last week, the Washington Post reported that the Duke Ellington High School Jazz Band in the District is the only jazz band in the country selected to attend an international competition.

The District also provides noncompulsory, full-day, early childhood education programs for children in pre-K and kindergarten. This early childhood program is viewed by many to be a model program for the rest of the country. Actually, as news reports have indicated, there are many parents from neighboring states who are illegally sending their children to the city's public schools because they believe the programs are high quality.

These kinds of effective programs exist in District of Columbia public schools and should be encouraged. But vouchers do not enhance competition among public schools or between public and non public schools. Public and private schools operate under a different set of regulations. Public schools adhere to policies related to standards, access, curriculum, teacher certification, and nondiscrimination. Private schools are frequently exempt from these requirements. Public schools must take students, while private schools select whom they will teach. Further, public schools that cannot adequately serve students with their current budgets will not be able to compete any better with fewer public resources. Not only will schools lose the money that goes with the student, but most likely schools will lose program funds awarded on a formula basis.

Voucher programs are not about parental choice, but about the non public school's choice. Private schools are selective and have admissions criteria that students must meet. Parents only get to apply to the school; the school chooses whom will be admitted. The term "choice" sounds appealing, but in fact vouchers are a cruel hoax on many parents whose children will not gain admittance to the schools they choose. Private schools can refuse to accept students based on their academic performance, gender, and religion, as well as physical and language abilities. Society would be taking a giant step backward to allow public money to finance schools that discriminate against students on the basis of gender, religion, or disability.

Furthermore, vouchers that flow to religious schools are unconstitutional. Over 85 percent of all students enrolled in private schools attend sectarian institutions. Vouchers will pay for religious instruction and advance the sectarian mission of the schools, which violates the constitutional guarantee of church and state separation.

In sum, vouchers provide no benefits to public schools. The real beneficiaries are private schools. Voucher proposals create an enormous financial windfall to private schools and the students in those schools.

In closing, I note that education policy must be about helping all children, not a select few. Public schools are the cornerstone of our democracy. Public schools promote the ideals of democracy, equity, and opportunity. Public schools were created to give every child a chance to learn and succeed. They are there to promote cultural and racial diversity and advance citizenship. And we should do all we can to ensure that neighborhood public schools provides a quality education for all children.

Senator COATS. Finally, our last witness on this panel is Barbara Lewis, who joins us today from Indiana. Barbara is the mother of three children, one of whom had the opportunity to participate in a privately-funded education choice charitable trust program that was established in Indianapolis.

Barbara is also the president of Families Organized for Real Choice in Education, a grassroots parents' group she has organized in Indianapolis in support of publicly-funded scholarships for all families.

Barbara, welcome. We look forward to your testimony.

Ms. LEWIS. Thank you, Senator Coats, and I thank the subcommittee for having me here.

The reason I am here is to speak about school choice, and as Ms. Stallworth was saying, we are not for just the funds to send our children to private schools. We are here to give parents the right to send their children to whatever public or private school they choose for their children that will best suit their needs for their children's futures.

I became involved with choice because I had one child who was beginning school age. I sent him to Head Start and kindergarten even though it was not required in Indiana for parents to do so. I did this to better prepare him for the classroom environment. I taught him ABC's, his numbers, his phone number and address at home, and I expected the school to reinforce this at school, but I did not get that. He played all day instead of learning what he should have learned in the public school system.

I had the opportunity to send him to a township school. The first township school he attended, I was happy with, but due to circumstances beyond our control, we had to move out of that township. I was able to find a school close to the new house we moved into, but when they realized we were an African American family, we were told that our child could not attend that school because he would have to be bussed to a township school miles away from our home.

I was very angry and confused over why I could not send my child to a school 2 blocks away from our home, and instead, he had to be bussed in the early hours of the morning to a school miles away that we knew nothing about.

My son began to struggle in this school. He was not getting the attention he needed. I constantly got reports that he was an above-average student just not meeting his potential. At no time did a teacher ever try to set up a parent conference with me to see what we could come up with to help my child.

I requested extra credit work, and I tried to set up meetings with the teacher, to no avail. I could never get in touch with the teacher. I began to lose hope. I felt that my child's gifts were being wasted. I have two other children, and my children mean the world to me. I was looking to the public school system to give them an education and to better their future, to make sure they had a chance in life to better their lives. But that was not happening. My son was losing interest. He did not want to go to school. He was not happy.

Fortunately, in 1991, school choice came to Indianapolis. It was not a gift from the legislature. It came in a privately-funded program called the Educational Choice Charitable Trust. I saw the possibility of saving my child's future.

I applied for choice. It only offered to pay 50 percent of the tuition up to $800, which is a small fraction of what taxpayers pay for public schools per child. Alphonso was accepted, and I put him in Holy Cross Central Catholic School. That was my choice. I could have sent him to whatever school I wished.

I must admit there was a period of transition—culture shock, you might call it. He had to get used to the discipline; he had to get used to doing homework; he missed his old friends. But Alphonso began to learn about learning, to respect the kids around him and his teachers, he began to learn about citizenship, discipline and doing his lessons.

The values I was teaching him at home were finally being reinforced at school. I am pleased to say that Alphonso's story is a happy one. My son blossomed into an honor roll student, a student council leader, and a football standout. He has been accepted into highly competitive Cathedral High School, and his head is definitely on straight. I am very proud of my son. I am very proud of the education that he has received from the schools that I have sent him to.

If there is a sad part of this story, it is that a lot of other parents in Indiana who are hoping for choice and who want the same thing for their children's future—to be able to send them to schools that will help them in their future endeavors for their children's education—are not able to get this help because the Choice Charitable Trust does not have funds to cover everyone. There are over 1,000 children right now in the trust program; there are another 800 or so on a waiting list.

School choice is not a new issue. People of financial means have always had this choice of where they would send their children, to what school. They could afford to move where they wanted, and they could afford the tuition for private schools, while lower-income families with the same hopes and dreams for their children and their children's futures are denied the choice, and they should not be.

We are in the early stages of pulling our organization together. It is called FORCE, Families Organized for Real Choice in Education. We had planned to have a membership of 100 by September, but there was an article written about us in the Indianapolis Star, and since then, we have looked at our goals rising. Our membership will surpass the 100 mark by September, and we will lobby the legislature to allow school choice.

We see no reason why the parent who chooses the food her children will eat, the clothes her children will wear and the doctors her children will see should have nothing to say about the school the child will attend. It is time that ordinary parents were able to say, "I can take my business elsewhere," as millions of parents to every day—at least, the ones that can afford to.

We take inspiration in the story of Polly Williams, an African American legislator from Milwaukee, who has crusaded for publicly-funded school choice scholarships in that State. We take hope in the apparent groundswell of interest in our community for an organized approach to parent power to insist on the right to protect their children's future.

We note that opinion surveys show that all segments of population—African American, Caucasian, Hispanic American and others—consistently favor the right for parents to choose their schools and direct the money to those schools that meet the needs of their children.

For the next few months, FORCE will be developing its membership, formally incorporating, and speaking out on behalf of our cause, publicly-funded scholarships for all children. We do not know a lot about the political process—we are guilty of being unsophisticated—but we are committed, and we are unafraid.

Again, I want to thank you for letting me speak today on school choice.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lewis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BARBARA S. LEWIS

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee: My name is Barbara S. Lewis. I am pleased to appear before you on behalf or the parents in Indiana who are in the process of organizing a formal advocacy group—Families Organized for Real Choice in Education. I wish to especially thank Senator Coats for inviting me to share these developments in Indiana. Needless to say as a mother of three children, and a three-days a week office worker at Charles Schwab and Co. Inc., I am not the experienced and sophisticated spokesperson you no doubt often have before you. But I will speak from the heart to tell you who I am, how and why I came to join with other parents to seek school choice legislation, and why we believe it is imperative that all families should be able to take charge of the schooling of their own children through publicly funded scholarships.

A few years ago my child attended Indianapolis Public and Township Schools. That school system has been in long decline, especially in the inner city. I sent my child to Head Start and Kindergarten even though it is not required in Indiana, I did this to better prepare my son for the classroom environment. I was very disappointed because all he did was play all day. I sent him in hopes of getting reinforcement of what I was teaching him at home, his ABC's, his numbers, his address and phone number and he did not get that, but there was no were else I could turn.

The first Township School my son attended in Lawrence I was happy with my child had homework everyday the teachers cared, my son had good friends but due to circumstances beyond my control we moved out of Lawrence Township. I found a house not far from a school I thought my child would attend, but when called to enroll my son in that school I was questioned about the race of my family and when I said we were an African-American family I was informed my son could not attend the school just a few blocks away from our new home, instead he would be bused miles away to another township.

I was very angry and confused by this, Alphonso began to struggle. I began to get comments on his report card that he was an above average student but he just wasn't meeting his potential they never set a parent teacher meeting with me. I could never catch the teacher to set up a meeting myself. Alphonso is a good boy and an excellent student, but he was giving up and losing interest. He and my other two kids mean everything to me, and I could see his gifts being wasted, his chance to make something of himself going down the drain. I wanted desperately to find a better way. But I couldn't afford to move to the suburbs. And I couldn't afford

to put him in a private school. It appeared we were stuck, with the "take it or leave it" schools we were offered.

Fortunately in 1991 school choice came to Indianapolis. It was not a gift from the legislature. It came from a privately funded program called The Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust. I saw the possibility of saving Alphonso's education and his future, and I applied. Choice offered to pay 50 percent of the tuition up to $800.00, a small fraction of what taxpayers pay for public schools per child. Alphonso was accepted and I entered him in Holy Cross Central Catholic School. I must admit there was a period of transition, culture shock you might call it. He had to get used to the discipline and the homework, he missed his old friends. But Alphonso began to learn about learning, to respect the kids around him and be respected, to learn about citizenship, discipline, and doing your lessons. The values I was teaching him at home were finally being reinforced at school.

I am pleased to say, Alphonso's story is a happy one. My son blossomed into an honor roll student, a student council leader, and a football standout. He has been accepted into highly competitive Cathedral High School, and his head is definitely on straight. I am very proud of my son.

If there is a sad part of this story, it is that not every mother in my situation can get the help I got. The CHOICE Trust has limited funds. There are about 800 youngsters on the waiting list, and many more I am sure would apply if funding were available.

I began talking to other parents—ordinary people who believe our schools are not helping to put our children on the road to a better life. As we talked, we saw that the political forces in our state had never seen the need to consider the voice of urban parents, because it had never been heard. None of us know a lot about politics, but we do know we are responsible for our children and government is opposed to be responsible to us.

School Choice is not a new issue people of financial means have always had this choice of where they would or could send their children to school. They could afford to move were they wanted, they could afford the tuition for private schools, while lower income families with the same hopes and dreams for their childrens' future are denied that Choice and they should not be.

We were in the early stages of pulling our organization together, when a writer from the Indianapolis Star heard about our meeting , she attended a meeting and published an editorial just last July 8. If I may, I would submit a copy of that editorial as part of the record.

The editorial included our telephone number, and since that time several dozen parents have responded by telephone or mail, seeing our efforts as a beacon of hope. They want to be a part of that voice our legislators must begin to hear. We are not concerned about the big money on the other side. We are ready to insist, as our mission statement says, to see that all families should have the right to choose the public or private school that will allow that child to succeed. We believe parental choice will restore the family's primary role to the education of our children, regardless of income, race, religion or location, and to ignite a rebirth of the schools in Indiana.

We see no reason that the parent who chooses the food her children will eat, the clothes her children will wear and doctors her children will see, should have nothing to say about the school the child will attend. It is time ordinary parents were able to say "I can take my business elsewhere"—as millions of parents do every day, at least those that can afford to.

We take inspiration in the story of Polly Williams, the African-American legislator from Milwaukee, who has crusaded for publicly funded school choice scholarships in that State.

We take hope in the apparent ground swell of interest in our community for an organized approach to parent power to insist on our right to protect our children's future.

We note that opinion surveys show that all segments of the population—African-Americans, Caucasians, Hispanic Americans, and others consistently favor the right of parents to choose their schools and direct the money to those schools that meet the needs of their children.

In the next few months, F.O.R.C.E. will be developing its membership, formally incorporating, and speaking out on behalf of our cause, publicly funded scholarships for our children.

We do not know a lot about the political process. We are guilty of being unsophisticated. But we are committed, and we are unafraid. Again, on behalf of the parents of F.O.R.C.E., I thank you for this opportunity to present our story.

A8 ... THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR • WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1997

EDITORIALS

"Let the people know the facts and the country will be saved."
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Pushing school choice

When Alphonso Harrell enrolls at Cathedral High School this fall, he will be fulfilling not only his mother's dreams but the expectations of all who believe school choice means a better education for inner-city students.

For the past six years, Alphonso has received tuition support from the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust program launched by J. Patrick Rooney of Golden Rule insurance Co. The money allowed his mother to remove him from Indianapolis Public Schools where he was "falling through the cracks" so he could go to Holy Cross Catholic School on the city's Near Eastside.

After a rocky start, Alphonso blossomed into an honor roll student, football standout and council leader. His acceptance into highly competitive Cathedral is proof of his success.

A new grass-roots organization will lobby the legislature for a publicly funded voucher program.

Now, Alphonso's mother, Barbara Lewis, wants to give all IPS students the same opportunities that Alphonso and her other two children have enjoyed through CHOICE. Lewis is president of a new grass-roots organization that will lobby the legislature for a publicly funded voucher program to help parents pay for private schools. The group is called FORCE, Families Organized for Real Choice in Education, and wants to recruit 100 members by September.

"This is something I strongly believe in," says Lewis, who became frustrated with the public system when Alphonso was in second grade and had to catch a bus at 6:30 a.m. to be sent to a township school miles away. "Right now, if you live in IPS and have no money, you have no choice."

The timing for such a group couldn't be better. Satisfaction with IPS seems at an all-time low and political support for choice is growing. Forty-three governors support some type of school choice and the nation has at least 31 private scholarship programs like Golden Rule's.

In Milwaukee, which has the longest-running school choice experiment, studies show significant academic strides made by inner-city students sent to private schools after three years. Although a taxpayer-funded expansion of the program was struck down by a Wisconsin court, advocates are poised to implement it should they win on appeal.

In Indiana, Gov. Frank O'Bannon supports choice among public schools, but not private ones. Teacher union opposition has killed all choice bills in recent legislative sessions, though the legal hurdles appear more daunting than the political ones. Opponents of vouchers contend it is unconstitutional to use tax dollars for tuition at religious schools. Supporters liken a voucher system to the post-World War II bill, which funded college educations for veterans.

The popularity of CHOICE in Indianapolis is perhaps the strongest sign of public support. The program funds half of tuition up to $800 so children in low-income families can attend any of the city's private schools. About 1,000 children are in the program; 800 are on the waiting list.

But up to now, the argument for choice has been waged largely by Chamber of Commerce types concerned about education of tomorrow's work force. What's been missing is the voice of inner-city parents fed up with the condition of their schools.

That certainly describes Lewis, who says she doesn't understand critics who predict private school vouchers will destroy public education. She encourages folks who agree with her to call FORCE at 726-7962. "We don't have choice now and the public school system is destroying itself."

She's right, but it will take a massive display of support to break the teachers' union domination of this issue. If FORCE can become a genuine political force by the 1998 legislature, choice backers may finally stand a fighting chance.

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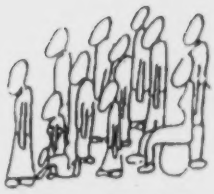
Join the



F.O.R.C.E.

Families Organized for Real Choice in Education

WE ARE PARENTS, and WE'RE FED UP with TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT SCHOOLS

We want schools that **do teach**, that **do protect** our children, that **do prepare them** for a literate future with opportunity.

HOW ABOUT YOU???

What is F.O.R.C.E.?

Families Organized for Real Choice in Education (F.O.R.C.E.) believes that all families should have the right to choose the public or private school that will allow their child to succeed.

We believe parental choice will restore the family's primary role in the education of our children, regardless of income, race, religion, or location, and to ignite a rebirth of Indiana's schools.

What will we do?

F.O.R.C.E. will identify, recruit, inform, train, and organize concerned Hoosier parents for one, and only one purpose—to promote legislation in support of real school choice.

F.O.R.C.E. parents will write and visit legislators to express their support for school choice, testify at hearings concerning choice legislation, write letters and articles for local newspapers, and recruit other parents to join F.O.R.C.E.

F.O.R.C.E. will pit parent power against the BIG MONEY that has a vested interest in denying parents this choice. We will make sure that when school choice again comes before the Legislature, that the voices of parents are heard.

School Report Card Failing to Make the Grade

...e quality of our schools has declined steadily ...r years- measured by standard tests, by drop-out ...tes, by literacy rates, and by preparation for ...ork or college. One of the saddest examples has ...en the long-term decline of the Indianapolis ...blic Schools, where the economically disadvan...ged are trapped, parents and students alike, in a system with no competitive reason to change. The schools too often leave students with little hope to build a brighter future.

Yet faced with performance failures for years, our school authorities have only excuses. No child who brought home a report as bad as these schools get, would dare offer excuses so lame.

Allowing school funding to follow the parent's choice would create badly needed competition, and would give public schools the incentive to shape up.

Who is in Charge Here?

Every conscientious parent takes great care in choosing the food her child will eat, the clothing her child will wear, the doctor her child will visit. But our legislators consistently believe that same parent should have no choice about the school the child will attend.

It's time for parents to say "I can take my business elsewhere--even if I am not a person of means. Prepare my child to my satisfaction, or I will find a school that will."

School Choice is on the Move Across the Country

The *Wisconsin* Legislature has responded to the brave crusade of Polly Williams, an African-American legislator from Milwaukee, who saw the cruel hoax of schools that did not teach. Today a limited school choice program is under way in *Milwaukee*, while a broader program open to all students and all private schools is being tested in the courts.

In *Ohio*, the legislature has created a school choice pilot program in *Cleveland*, and the lower court has upheld its constitutionality.

In *Vermont*, school choice has always existed in certain rural areas of Vermont, including religious schools, until the courts banned, then approved, their inclusion.

Recent court decisions have suggested that a government program that has a legitimate goal (education), and is neutral as to religion (the parents direct the state scholarship), would not be struck down as an unconstitutional establishment of religion by the government. We have every reason to hope and believe this reasoning will govern school choice.

School Choice Works

School choice works in Indianapolis where 1,014 inner-city children qualified in 1996-97 for a matching scholarship from the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust, a privately funded school choice program launched in 1991. In fall, 1997, 29 other cities will have CHOICE-like programs with almost 14,000 students enrolled, and an additional 40,000 on waiting lists.

On July 8, 1997, The Indianapolis Star in an editorial focused on how such a scholarship had allowed the mother of young Alphonso Horrell to remove him from Indianapolis Public Schools "where he was falling through the cracks," so he could go to Holy Cross Catholic School. "Alphonso blossomed into an honor roll student, football standout and council leader." Now he has been accepted into competitive Cathedral High School, and is realizing his mother's fondest hopes.

But there are 800 other students, also from families of modest means, still waiting for a chance at the limited scholarship help. Alphonso's mother, Barbara Lewis, President of F.O.R.C.E., who believes that every family should have the option of a publicly funded scholarship to use in or outside the public school system.

Such publicly funded programs are operating in Milwaukee and Cleveland today. The Star said, "In Milwaukee, which has the longest-running school choice experiment, studies show significant academic strides made by inner-city students sent to private schools . . . ."

Get Involved Now! Your Child Will be the Winner!

If you want to put parents back in charge of their children's education, join F.O.R.C.E. today. Just fill out the form on the back and, mail it to F.O.R.C.E. at P. O. Box 44069, or call (317) 726-7963 and join hands with parents just like you. Don't worry about the BIG MONEY folks who stand in our way. Your child is worth the battle.

We deserve a CHOICE--
Our children deserve a CHANCE.

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Senator COATS. Barbara, thank you very much, and thanks to all of our panelists for their contributions.

Dr. Fuller, you served formerly as the Superintendent of Public Schools for Milwaukee, and as such are in a unique position I think to evaluate the role of public schools versus the role of private schools, and you talked about maintaining two objectives. One is to, through an internal process, strengthen the public schools, and the second is to offer alternatives outside.

How would you respond to Alieze Stallworth's comments about the fact that choice as an alternative to public schools would result in taking away the best students, leaving the public schools in a worse situation than they are now, and the other comments she raised? As someone from your perspective of having served in both, what would you say to her?

Mr. FULLER. I would say to her what I say to everyone else—that I think that as long as you maintain the power relationships as they currently exist in school districts, where the power of change is fully in the hands of those people who work in the system, with all due respect to her, for that significant number of students who are not achieving, this system is not going to change deeply enough and quickly enough to deal with those kids.

My view is fairly simple. It is that if you are in a system, as I was as a superintendent, demanding change, but everyone there is clear that whether a single child learns or not, everybody is going to get paid, if everybody is clear that in schools that have never educated kids, each year, you are going to put more kids in there, there is not one, single thing I can do about, and all the rhetoric in the world is not going to change that.

What I am saying is simply this. I think you have got to have a series of options for parents. I support charter schools. I support site-based management—that is real site-based management. I support anything that changes the options for parents. But I am here to say that if one of those options is not choice that gives poor parents a way to leave, the kind of pressure that you need internally is simply not going to occur.

So that when I listen to people like Ms. Stallworth, I appreciate where she is coming from, but from my perspective, after 20 years of fighting this, I just think that if you do not have this possibility there, if people do not begin to understand that if we do not begin to treat these people better, not only will they leave, but they will take the money with them, you are simply not going to get the force that you need for change. I believe that the people inside the system who are fighting for change need this type of leverage.

And I would end, Senator, by saying that the interesting thing about choice is that no one can force the parents to use the option, so that if the system is serving people well, why are they worried about losing the dollars, because it is a choice, and if people feel that the school system is not serving them well, they will simply leave.

In a study that we did—and I think that John Witte's stuff would back this up—because of the way the voucher program is designed in Milwaukee, the people who have used the program are, number one, the poorest parents; and number two, they are the

parents whose kids are doing least well in the system. It has been the opposite of this argument that people make that you are going to get this brain drain. Why would you get a brain drain if people are satisfied with what is happening in the school system?

The people who are leaving are the people whose kids are doing least well. That has been documented. That is not an anecdote; that is a documented fact.

So I would argue that how you design the program will go a long way toward determining who can use the program, and I do not think that what you are going to get is, quote—I always find this interesting—"all of the best people leaving," because if you look at most urban school districts in the country today, people are about 20 years late making that argument, because the people with money and resources have already left. So I always find these arguments interesting.

Senator COATS. Alieze, do you want to respond?

Ms. STALLWORTH. Definitely. I find it first of all interesting that it was stated that I said the brightest children would be drained off. I do not remember saying that this morning.

Mr. FULLER. And I did not say you did.

Ms. STALLWORTH. No, no, no. That was to the Senator. I did not say that. That was not my statement this morning. I did not talk about the level of intelligence of any students.

My whole platform is that I want all children to benefit from school reforms. I am by no means against choice. Washington, DC. will have and does have a charter school program. We also have site-based management. And this year, I have been very pleased with the new administration giving parents and communities the opportunity to sit at the table with them and be part of the discussion of our academic program, asking us what we do and do not like about it. And they have taken to heart and put it into their plans our comments and our feelings and concerns for our children.

To say that that would drain the brightest children would mean that my children would go, because they are very bright; but they will not be a part of your program, so you will not be draining the brightest children. My concern is that it will not support and improve education for all children. All children will remain my focus.

Senator COATS. Alieze, what would you say to someone like Pam Ballard, who tried to make it work for her family in the public school system in Cleveland, and she tried four different schools within the public school system, and each one of them failed her child miserably; and yet when she had the opportunity to get outside of that system, there were dramatic changes. What would you say to her? Can you look at her and say, well, you have got to make this work within the public system because we do not want to allow you the choice of getting outside this system even though you have tried four schools, and all four of those have failed your child? What would you tell her?

Ms. STALLWORTH. I would tell her that as a parent—because I have a child who has special needs, and she went to different schools also—one of the options that DC. public schools offered—and it is available to a lot of parents—is that we can go around, and we can look at our schools—I do not know about the Cleveland school system—but it if were deemed that she had a special need,

then I as a parent could go to the system and demand and take it to hearing and get her a private placement.

I would also ask a question. In the new private schools, what is the ratio of teachers to students?

Senator COATS. Well, let me ask you this——

Ms. STALLWORTH. That is an important thing that I think needs to be discussed. I would like to know the ratio of teachers to students compared to the public school ratios.

Senator COATS. I think all the statistics show that the ratio is much smaller, but what they also show is that the private schools achieve a smaller ratio with far less money available per student than the public schools. So I guess the question that has got to be asked is why is the money not getting through the system, down to the child, to provide smaller classrooms, to provide incentives for teachers.

Most large inner-city—in fact every one that I have looked at—public school systems spend two to three times the amount of money per child as the private systems, and yet the ratios are much larger. So that many parents I speak to are basically saying it is not a factor of money—I happen to be familiar with Holy Cross School in Indianapolis, and the amount of money they spend per student is about one-half to one-third of what the public schools spend, and yet they have smaller classrooms and have demonstrated better results. The difference is they do not eat up huge portions of money in administrative costs of a bureaucracy that does nothing to further the education of children.

Ms. STALLWORTH. And then we have got to begin a discussion of the responsibilities that the public schools have to all students; the responsibility that school systems such as DC. have to our special education students, which takes up a big portion, because we have got to provide all services under the IDEA Act that the Government requires. That is also calculated into our per-pupil cost—the maintenance of our facilities, the fact that we take in all children who come. We are not selective. Public schools have the responsibility of taking care of all children.

Senator COATS. Right. I have heard that argument, but Dr. Fuller said the irony here is that it is the poorest students, sometimes it is the students with the most problems—clearly, in Pam's case, the public schools probably breathed a sigh of relief when you took your child out of the public schools because they probably thought this child was taking up a lot of time and a lot of cost, and yet—well, Pam, I should give you a chance to respond.

Ms. BALLARD. Here is a picture of my family. This is my family. This is what I live for outside of God. When my daughter Antonice went to school, she did not smile; she did not know how to love; she did not know how to feel. She had no life in her. She was drained as a child.

No kid should have to suffer. It is not the fact that it is a private school; it is just a school with 30 students in a classroom that tried to teach her and love her and guide her in the right direction. The teachers and principals were not against me as a parent. They were not against my child. They took this child who was supposed to be a horrible behavioral problem child kid and turned her in a new direction. Now she is willing to learn.

I would like to say that I have worn my knees out praying for a change. My daughter had no interest in school. She had been to four different public schools. She had a satisfactory out of one school, and that is a lot, due to reasons of having to move or whatever.

Like I said, it is not about money. It is about the love and the care of children, and I as a parent and a lot of other parents in Cleveland feel that the Cleveland public school system does not offer their children love. There is not one Cleveland public school that I know about that you can walk into and feel as warm and loved as my daughter and I have at Hope Central Academy.

I live for this, and I pray that it continues. It is not about stopping the Cleveland public school system. It is a possibility that they may get on the bandwagon and do something. That is the purpose of the voucher or scholarship program, and that is what I truly feel.

I have read in the papers of the improvements in the Cleveland public school system since this program came about, and I am very, very grateful for it. It would probably have never happened if we had not had this opportunity or experiment for the poor children, or children period.

Thank you.

Senator COATS. Mr. Fuller.

Mr. FULLER. Senator Coats, first of all, I want to say to Ms. Stallworth that I really appreciate her tenacity and her views about all children, and I want her to know that although we may have a difference on this issue, I do not consider her the enemy because she wants to do what is right for her kids. And I want you to know that I personally appreciate that.

I want to make a couple of points. No. 1, it is true that public schools accept all children. It is not true that they keep all of these children. Every day as a superintendent, I was signing forms to get rid of kids that we did not want, for whatever reason, and we had no problems contracting with private vendors to take care of problem kids. So this idea that the public schools have to keep everybody and serve everybody is true in terms of admissions; it is not true in terms of sustenance. And just as people make the argument that kids leave private schools and go back to public schools, every day, kids are also leaving public schools or being put out of public schools, and there are all of these "alternative" programs, many of which are operated by private vendors, that we have no problem sending those kids to. We need to be honest about that on both sides of this equation.

No. 2, it is true that money is important. Although I disagree with Jonathan Kozal on some things, I think it is hard to argue that if you are spending $11,000 per child when another district only has $5,000, that it does not make a difference. It does make a difference. The question, though, is how do these dollars get spent. The question is where do these dollars go in terms of serving kids.

What I would argue is that what vouchers or the choice programs allow us to do is to have dollars follow students. But I want the largest amount of dollars to follow those students, because in my opinion, one of the things that choice schools and charter

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schools suffer from is the lack of access to resources, start-up dollars, lower levels of per-pupil expenditure that, over a long period of time, will have an impact because it makes it harder to maintain good teachers because you have turnover, you have a variety of problems, a number of them centered around financial issues. So I do think that the financial issues are important in the long run to serving kids, but the issue, philosophically, is do the dollars belong to the system or do the dollars belong to the parents and kids, and should those dollars follow children who make other choices.

So I end up fighting on both sides of this—fighting for equity, but fighting for giving parents the right to make the choices on where to use those dollars. And I think that that is an important element of this.

The third point I want to make is that those of us who are really trying to fight for all children will be there for changes throughout the total spectrum. In other words, if there is something positive happening in the existing system, we need to celebrate it, we need to highlight it. Even as we are talking about increasing options for parents whose kids are not being successful, we have to see that all as one battle. It is not one against the other; it is the same battle, in my opinion.

Senator COATS. Thank you. My time has more than expired, and I apologize to my colleagues.

We are privileged to have the chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, Senator Jeffords, with us.

Senator Jeffords, you did not have the opportunity to make an opening statement; if you want to do that, you are welcome to. We are pleased that you are participating in the hearing and also pleased to have you because of your long record of interest in education and in improving education for all children.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JEFFORDS

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very pleased to be here. This is an extremely important hearing. I sort of stand in the middle on the question of choice. Our State has choice, but we have quite different demographics than others. I am also deeply concerned about the public school system and being able to improve it.

I listened very carefully to your testimony, and as you know, I am deeply interested in the Washington, DC. schools. This is our Nation's Capital, and yet we have, as far as the kids go, the worst results academically of any metropolitan area. We also have the highest amount of money spent per pupil of any school district. So it is very difficult to determine just want needs to be done. Obviously, we have a need for $2 billion just in code repairs to the school system, so something has been wrong for many years as far as doing what ought to be done; and we need to figure out how to get out of that mess.

What I would like to know from you is what we can do now, with General Becton in charge, both to improve the professional development of our teachers as well as to get the school system to provide the kind of education that the children need, so that there is not this almost desperate desire and need for school choice. The thing that bothers me about school choice is the question of where it

brings you. Especially in Washington, DC., if you go to the end result that every child has a choice, does the public school system then disappear, or just where do we end up?

I do not have a problem with choice in the sense that I think it has really caused the teacher community and the school community to understand that they have got to make improvements. But I would ask you what you can do or are doing to see that we improve the standards in the schools, and what needs to be done? With the results we see right now, this is very difficult. As you know, I have started a program called Everybody Wins, where we have volunteers from the House and Senate going into two schools. We have seen dramatic improvement because of the involvement of people who are willing to sit with the kids and help them read.

What else needs to be done? How can we turn the city around?

Ms. STALLWORTH. Well, the first thing is to really hold those who have been put in place by the Control Board, our board of trustees and General Bechton accountable for doing the job that they have been sent in to do.

As to my efforts, I am on quite a few committees—and they are all volunteer jobs; I do not work for anyone but my community. I am on the committee that is looking at the education plan, and what I insisted on there is that they have something that addresses the needs of our secondary children. Even when you look at some of the voucher programs, many programs focus on elementary school children. We have children in middle high, junior high and high school who are suffering also. So my insistence and the insistence of people in the community should be that they look at and assess where the children are and provide them with the services they need and to keep the community involved—and I thanked you earlier for your involvement in the DC. public schools—to motivate more people to come into the public schools and become involved and see that their involvement with the children creates change, and to offer programs such as the one I mentioned earlier. If we really believe in our hearts and we all know that there are successful public and private schools within our city and our immediate area that could be linked in a partnership with DC. public school teachers where there is low performance.

We now have 23 targeted assisted schools, which I think is a great effort. I think the effort of putting principals on a one-year contract, and if their performance is not sufficient, we now have provisions in place where you can get rid of low-performing administrators and teachers.

Those are the types of things that we need to do for all children. Those are the types of programs that need support. As you know, our school buildings are in terrible disrepair, and on the same day that there was a rally here for the announcement of the Senate voucher bill, there was also a decision not to provide the system with the money that would help with our school improvement. Those facilities must be repaired, and they are not all just in the poorest neighborhoods. The poor facilities are all over the city just because there have been years of lack of repair. And as we know from a program that specifically focused with Senator Moseley-Braun, they showed Ohio schools and the terrible disrepair that they were in. 'I think that those are beginnings—to help fund staff

development programs that would truly link successful program with public school programs and therefore benefit all children, and take a long, hard look at funding in this country— because these schools are becoming dilapidated all over the country—programs would provide for the improvement of facilities. We know that our issues are not all monetary issues, and that is why there is the insistence on proper teacher training. And when we talk about DC.'s performance on some standardized tests, one thing I did notice was that—in the media, they have mentioned the NAEP test—one of the things I also noticed is that we are talking about a national, standardized test based on what is done nationally at the fourth grade level. When you look at our curriculum for the fourth grade, those are skills that our students learn in the fifth grade, and therefore, when you test them at the fourth grade, are you really testing DC. on DC.'s curriculum?

One thing we are working on, and I am part of the committee on curriculum and assessment, is linking our standards more closely with national standards, thereby helping our students have a curriculum that is on the same level of these tests that they are being asked to take.

The CHAIRMAN. This is the Nation's Capital, and I am going to urge the administration begin here with its volunteerism program. What we need right now, for example is something like America Reads or what I call Everybody Wins. We have now about 800 volunteers in the city who are helping kids in the primary grades, but we need 14,000 in order for each child to have someone to help him. So I am going to continue to bug the White House to demonstrate it here in Washington first because, if we cannot do it here, we cannot expect anybody else to do it. So I appreciate your comments.

Dr. Fuller, I was interested in your testimony. I would like to know whether the choice program is meant not only to assist those who attend it but also to set a standard for the public schools to reach, or do you anticipate that the final result would be no public schools? What do we look toward as far as choice?

Mr. FULLER. Senator Jeffords, it is good to see you again. Let me say this. I think the problem is in how you define what makes a school public, because in my mind, this is not about the disappearance of public schools. What this is about is redefining what it is that makes a school public.

My argument is the same as that of Kenneth Clark—what makes a school public is that it functions in the public interest—and that what we need to do is to look at a different conceptual design than what we currently have.

For example—and Paul Hill talks about this in "Reinventing Public Education"—if you could picture separating service delivery from policymaking, if you have a public body that makes policy, that determines standards, that decides how we are going to assess whether or not those standards are being met and determines what the consequences are going to be, if DC. public schools or any other public school system has 50,000, 100,000 kids to serve, and this public body, based on defining those standards, based on laying out those assessments, laying out the consequences, were to say we are wiling to have anybody come forward who can educate these kids

for whom we are responsible, you could have a variety of different configurations of the existing system that may come forth with a proposal; you could have charter schools that come forth with a proposal; you could have so-called choice schools that come through with a proposal. You could have a variety of different options that parents could choose from, and the elected public body could establish its portfolio that would allow these kids to learn.

What I am trying to say to you, Senator Jeffords, is that if you do not somehow change the existing power relationships, the existing configurations, no matter how deeply you feel about making change, it is not going to occur, because the dynamics of the system are a curb to the kind of change that you want to make. If you leave it intact, and you operate it under its current form, we are not going to make the difference that we want to make for all of the children.

But this need not be and will not be "the end of public education." It is redefining what is a public educational system in 1997—not what was it in 1860, but what should it look like in 1997, 1998, the year 2000.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I could not agree with you more. I think we have got to recognize that we have serious problems in the public education school system, and it does have to be redesigned to meet the needs of kids in this age.

You also mentioned documentation with respect to the children who leave and go into private schools. I am not asking you to provide it right now. If you could just let me know where I can find that material, I would appreciate it.

Mr. FULLER. Yes, I will give that to you—even though there will be contention about these studies later on. Even John Witte's study admits that the kids who are going into the program in Milwaukee are kids from the poorest families and that the kids who are going in there are the kids who are doing least well, not the kids who are succeeding. So this whole problem that people are raising that all the good kids are going to, quote, "leave"—I always find interesting. The people who are leaving are the people whose kids are not successful, and those are the people that I think these programs ought to be designed to serve.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, this is an excellent hearing, one of the best that I have attended, and I appreciate your efforts in putting it together. I think it really lays out the difficulties we are having in our school systems, and the question is how do you improve them. So I thank you very much.

Senator COATS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are obviously violating our 5-minute rule here this morning, but I think it is an issue of such importance that it deserves good, thorough discussion, and that is what we are attempting to do.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Fuller, you have been involved in the Milwaukee schools for years. Do you think the State of Wisconsin provides adequate resources for the Milwaukee school system in comparison to other school systems in the State?

Mr. FULLER. As the superintendent, I was very clear that I wanted equity in financing, and I still believe that. When you look at the outliners in Wisconsin—and we have outliers where you have 11,000, which is the one that is usually quoted, which is actually in the rural parts of Wisconsin, where you have the lowest levels of per-pupil expenditure—in my view, we need a system that does not allow for those kinds of outliers. So I am arguing that we need additional resources in Milwaukee, but there is no reason to give us additional resources if the system is going to remain exactly as it is.

So that when people raise that question to me, my answer is yes, I want additional resources for poor children, but I also do not want those additional resources to be used to fund a system as it currently exists. That is my answer.

Senator REED. So the other systems just across the line from Milwaukee, you see as excellent models of public education?

Mr. FULLER. Depending upon which one of those you are talking about, I would argue that their kids are doing better on test scores as a measurement of academic achievement.

Just recently, the latest test scores that came out showed, again, this continued gap between achievement levels by white kids and achievement levels by poor kids, most of whom are nonwhite in Milwaukee. So you have got to conclude one of two things—that these poor kids are incapable of learning or that we have got to do something differently to enhance their learning. I believe that all children are capable of learning if we as adults can put them in the right environment to learn.

So based upon your question, my argument would depend upon which one of these schools districts you are asking me about. Are you asking me about Nicolet or are you asking me about West Allis?

Senator REED. Well, I am asking you to make a judgment about whether you see public education in Wisconsin as inherently incapable of doing the job, or if there are special problems with respect to the City of Milwaukee. Some of those problems, I think you would agree would be because the resources that other communities get, you do not get, and in fact you might need even more resources because you face very particular challenges, probably demographics that are much more low-income than other places, also—I do not know all the details—but I would assume a preponderance of single-parent families, a preponderance of unemployed——

Mr. FULLER. Yes, right.

Senator REED [continuing]. A whole series of social factors that would argue for significant resources regardless of whether you are putting them into charter schools, vouchers or anything else.

Mr. FULLER. Right, but——

Senator REED. And I guess I would also ask you to make the judgment as to whether this is equally a severe or even a greater problem than spending a few million dollars on choice programs.

Mr. FULLER. But Senator, what we have to say is that there is a "regardless" that you put in there that has got to be revisited. What I am saying to you is that it is not an issue of "regardless" of whether or not you have choice, charters, and so on. I am saying

to you that that has got to be in the mix; that you cannot say let us have more money, and it is the money that is going to make a difference regardless of whether you have these other things. I am saying that you cannot say that; you have got to say both.

Senator REED. Well, let me respond by saying that you also seem to be saying that unless you have more money, even with choice, you are not going to succeed as you want to succeed with public education in Milwaukee.

Mr. FULLER. I am saying that if we continue to fund choice schools at a level that is lower than the level that we are funding the existing schools, the chances of those schools succeeding over the long-term are not as good. So I am going to continue to fight for more money for those schools as well.

But if there is something you are trying to get me to say that I am not saying, tell me, because the point I am trying to make is that yes, if you want me to say people need more money, yes—yes, I think people need more money, but only if the money is going to be spent differently.

Senator REED. But Dr. Fuller, we are all struggling with the issue of why certain public school systems are failing, particularly urban school systems.

Mr. FULLER. Right.

Senator REED. And one of the reasons, I think—and weighing whether it is the most dispositive or the least or somewhere in the middle is difficult—but one reason is that because of State laws, State funding formulas, because of boundaries between different districts—all of these things have contributed in some respects to the decline of public education in many people's view. And yet the one solution that seems to be advanced today is that all we have to do is just create these school voucher programs, and all those other problems will disappear.

Mr. FULLER. First of all, Senator, you never heard that come out of my mouth.

Senator REED. I think we are engaged in a dialogue, and we have gone a long way to communicate that.

Mr. FULLER. I am like Ms. Stallworth—that did not come out of my mouth. Senator, what I said was very clear. I said that we need to pursue a variety of reforms, and I argued that one of the reforms that has got to be in the mix is the reform that gives poor parents control over dollars. That is what I said.

I also said to you that if somebody comes tome and says if I have got $11,000 to spend and you have $6,000, it does not make any difference, I am saying it does make a difference depending upon how we are going to use those dollars.

Senator REED. One of the virtues which many proponents of school choice point to is exactly that point, that these school systems are doing so much—these schools, rather; very few are in systems—these schools are doing so much with so little, that that is one of their commendable aspects, that they do not have all of this overhead and so on, so they can survive. In fact, that is one of the selling points that I think has been mentioned today by the chairman.

Do you agree with that?

Mr. FULLER. Well, I head what the chairman said, and I understand the difference between a huge overhead and no over head and so on. I guess some of my friends in the voucher movement believe that I am a little bit off on this, because I keep saying that you have smaller class sizes, for example, in choice schools and charter schools because they are smaller schools. Almost all of these schools are very small schools. I do not know of any charter schools or choice schools in America right now that are large schools with 2,000, 3,000 kids. And most of the research out there today talks about the need to establish smaller schools—not just small class sizes, but smaller schools.

So that when you are forming these charter schools and choice schools, that is what is occurring.

Now, to speak directly to what you are raising, I think you have got to look at each school system to determine whether or not the amount of money that they are spending on, quote, "the bureaucracy," is out of whack, because if you have a school district with 100,000 kids, for example, as we have—when I left as a superintendent, once I really separated out all of the parts as far as what is really central administration and what is really school-based, our central administration costs were about 5 to 6 percent. For me, the real issue on the expenditure of dollars is when you get into the high schools, and you start looking at how the dollars are allocated in high schools, and when you have to allocate dollars purely on a number of students to a number of adults, and you do not have the capacity to really be creative in how you use those dollars.

So one of the advantages that choice and charter schools presumably will have if they do not get regulated to death is the ability to take existing dollars and use them differently to meet the needs of the kids.

I would argue that that ought to exist for the existing system, and one of the things that I would hope is that as charters and choice and other options model these possibilities, people will begin to create those same possibilities for the existing system. That is what I mean by changing the entire system.

Do you agree with that?

Senator REED. I think your insights are very perceptive, but let us take the next step forward. Let us assume—in fact, I think we already know—that smaller class sizes, smaller schools—maybe not smaller school buildings, but schools within existing buildings—all of those things offer great promise. How much would that cost the City of Milwaukee to do? In fact, I will assume that that is the way to do it; that is the voucher model. How much would it cost the City of Milwaukee?

Mr. FULLER. My argument right now—since I really have not look at it in the last 2 years in terms of what the cost would be, because as superintendent, I dealt with those figures every day——

Senator REED. I understand, but I mean ball park, what are we talking about?

Mr. FULLER. My argument would be that what I want to have happen in the first instance, the changes in the structural possibilities would not require any additional dollars. In other words, to

allow for choice, charters and whatever in and of itself does not require additional dollars.

Senator REED. I will take that assumption. Now we have validated that model; we have validated the model that smaller class size, smaller school size, more flexibility, which probably would presume more teachers, frankly——

Mr. FULLER. Right.

Senator REED [continuing]. Is the model to pursue. Now, if our goal is to fix public education, and we have the remedy, now we have to apply the remedy to the school system of Milwaukee. How much extra would that cost?

Mr. FULLER. I do not have an answer to that.

Senator REED. And why don't we do that now?

Mr. FULLER. I do not know the answer to that.

Senator REED. And why don't we do it now?

Mr. FULLER. You will have to ask someone other than me that question. I do not know the answer to that question.

Senator REED. Just one other question. You did make the point—and I think it was a very good point—about the fact that public education does let kids go—they farm them out. But isn't there a distinction between accepting a child, working with a child for a year, 2 years, 2 months even, and then discovering that the child needs additional public-supported assistance—isn't there a difference between that and some voucher programs where in fact the private schools will say we are not taking your child?

Mr. FULLER. Well, first of all, I do not support any program that is publicly-funded that will deny entrance to kids.

Senator REED. I am asking you, for instance, in Wisconsin, does the Milwaukee program allow private schools to say we are not taking your child?

Mr. FULLER. The way the Milwaukee program is designed, if you are going to participate in the choice program, you have got to take all children who are eligible to participate in the program.

Senator REED. Are those children with disabilities?

Mr. FULLER. Here is the issue on disabilities. You need to be clear that not all public schools in America accept all kids with all disabilities. You need to be very clear about that. And the issue here is if you are going to ask a school to take kids with disabilities, are you also going to give them the additional dollars that come with educating those children.

You also have public schools in America right now that do not have the physical facilities to allow all kids in. Even with the IDEA legislation, you have got to develop a plan where you will begin to modify your buildings. So you need to be very clear that in no system in America today do all schools in all of those districts accept all kids with all kinds of learning problems.

Senator REED. But I think we have to be equally clear that a public school system has to accept that child—maybe not that one building that the child wants to go—but they have to be in that system, or fully paid for in some appropriate place.

Mr. FULLER. And the choice schools in Milwaukee that are accepting kids are accepting kids that people would define as having "ex ed," or exceptional education, needs.

Senator REED. But they could deny children who are disabled?

Mr. FULLER. No, no. The only way, Senator, that you can deny a child access is if you do not have the capacity to meet his or her needs. That is the only basis. And that is the basis today.

What I am telling you is that right now, today, there are, quote, public schools in America that do not accept kids with all types of disabilities because they do not have the capacity to meet those kids' needs.

Senator REED. But on this question of capacity, is that the capacity programmatically or physically, that they do not have the space?

Mr. FULLER. Programmatic, physical.

Senator REED. So in the school I have started, I do not have a program for this type of learning disability, and I do not have to take the child. Is that correct?

Mr. FULLER. What I would say to you, however, is that if the dollars would follow those kids, then you could begin to make arrangements, as public schools have done, to find other schools that will take those children and have the dollars go with those children.

Senator REED. I think we are getting back as we always do in these discussions to the dollars and to the point some proponents say that the virtue of these voucher schools is that they do not require all of these dollars and opponents saying this is the reason they do not require those dollars, because they can carefully say we do not take certain students because we do not have the capacity.

Mr. FULLER. Let me just be clear. The type of voucher program that I am talking about—and I want to be real clear on this—if you accept publicly-funded vouchers, in my view, you should serve all children.

Now, in accepting those children, you ought to also get the additional resources that come with those children, and you should have the capacity if for some reason you cannot serve the needs of those kids full-time, but there are other kinds of services that you think you can bring to the children if you have the dollars, to be able to provide arrangements for that to happen for those children. That is what I am saying.

Senator REED. I see your point, and——

Senator COATS. Senator Reed, this is a constructive discussion, and I think the point has been made.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COATS. And while I am trying to keep this open-ended, we do need to move on. Just to clarify for the record and for you, Senator Reed, the point I was trying to make with Afieze Stallworth is not that we should spend less money educating our children; it is that if the goal is to achieve lower teacher-pupil ratios and smaller classrooms, I guess I agree with Dr. Fuller that pouring more money into a system that does not direct that money toward achieving those ratios, but keeps pouring the money into an existing system that eats it up in a bureaucracy, does not achieve the goal.

So the point that I think Dr. Fuller has been trying to make and the point I tried to make with that example is not that we should spend less, but that we should change the systems in those school systems that do not constructively use the extra money that is coming in. Some of our school systems have been documented as spend-

ing well over 50 percent of their so-called funds per pupil not in the classroom, not in paying teachers, not in lowering class sizes, but adding a more bureaucratic structure into the existing system, and that is the point I was trying to make with my response to Ms. Stallworth, not that there is a virtue in spending less money per pupil.

Having said that, we are dangerously pushing time, and we have a second panel we want to hear from also, and I would be happy to readdress that question if you wish on the second round.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COATS. Senator Hutchinson, you were the first one here—you even beat the chairman—and we have not followed the scriptural injunction that "the last shall be first." You have been very patient, and I appreciate that, and if you can stay around for the second panel, I will make you first, and I will give you my time.

Senator HUTCHINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Fuller, let me pick up on something that Senator Reed was asking. If I understood correctly, he went through a process in which he outlined what a model school would look like that is producing the right kind of educational product, and we went through the small classroom, the student-teacher ratio and so forth. If it were possible to look out there at public schools, private schools, parochial and all the various kinds of schools, all the options that are available, and we could find the model classroom that is producing the best educational product—good scores, good discipline—and we could overlay that on the public school system and mandate that that be in place, and we gave them the resources to do that, but we did not change a monopolistic system as you were referring to earlier, where the options are not available, would we get the same results? Would we see the same kind of achievement in that kind of system, in your opinion?

Mr. FULLER. Senator, I do not think you can overlay what you just said and leave the current system intact. I think those are mutually exclusive. In other words, if you go out and try to find out what are the characteristics that exist in successful schools inside the existing system, private schools, parochial schools, and so on, and you try to overlay that on the existing system, I do not think you can, because many of the characteristics that exist are not allowed to exist in the existing system.

Senator HUTCHINSON. And I may have misunderstood, but it seemed to me that that is what Senator Reed was suggesting, was that if we find this, then we have found the solution, and if we could somehow——

Mr. FULLER. Yes, Senator. The interesting would be if that is true, why haven't we done it. You come to these hearings, and you end up trying to defend a reason why you want to change something that is not working, and it is as if somehow you are supposed to be on the defensive for wanting to change.

So my argument to all of these people who keep talking about if we just add more money and so on is if that is the case, why hasn't this occurred. Why are we having this hearing?

Senator HUTCHINSON. Yes. Well, we have heard a lot about the need for more resources. Ms. Stallworth talked about that, and Senator Reed talked about that. In Arkansas, we do not have pri-

vate school choice. Based upon 450,000 students in public schools, in 1994, only 10 percent of the eighth-graders under the NAEP test were proficient in reading—only 10 percent. And in the last 10 years, we have increased public school funding dramatically, and teacher salaries by 52 percent, and yet we have not seen any kind of comparable or analogous improvement in test scores.

To me, along with a lot of the other testimony we have heard today, that is very strong evidence that just by giving schools more money, without making the kinds of changes that have been suggested and providing more options and more competition, will not remedy what we are concerned about in our public schools.

Not wanting to put words in your mouth, but in your testimony as I was perusing it—in the amount of time I had to peruse it—you quote Dr. Clark, and you talk about the idea of a public school system being defined as being a school system in the public interest. I thought that that was a novel idea. And then you say that "A system which insists that its standards of performance should not or cannot be judged by those who pay the cost is not in the public interest."

Well, as a practical matter, without the Milwaukee choice program, low-income families would have no choice, and they would have no means of holding a school to a standard of performance; is that correct?

Mr. FULLER. My view is that it seems to me there are two main ways you hold people accountable. You hold them accountable—and I do not mean this in a negative way—through bureaucratic methods of holding people accountable. the other way you hold people accountable is by being able to withdraw your services. What I am trying to say is that to attack this problem, we need both.

Senator HUTCHINSON. So that in one sense, the bureaucratic approach would be to lay down new standards and impose new rules from above.

Mr. FULLER. Right.

Senator HUTCHINSON. The second approach would be where the parents would say, "I am going to exercise this other option, and I am going to take my students out and put them over here"——

Mr. FULLER. Correct.

Senator HUTCHINSON [continuing]. And that that is going to create the kind of incentive to say "we had better get our act together and make some changes and improve what we are doing."

Mr. FULLER. Correct.

Senator HUTCHINSON. Now, when Chairman Jeffords was here, he asked you the question whether the goal was for there to be no public schools. Well, it seems to me that what you have suggested is that the goal ought to be to have as many options as possible for parents, or at least a number of options available for parents, and that the options that survive are the options that are going to produce and perform, and that if there is not the performance, the option is not going to be utilized, and that is what will whither away; and that the survival of the public school system therefore would be to adjust and perform and produce the product.

Mr. FULLER. My argument is that in order for a school to be public, it need not be run by the Government; that that is not the only option for something to be public. The second part—and I want to

be real clear on this, because I do not view any of the options that I support as panaceas where, in and of themselves, all of a sudden, everything is going to be wonderful. I mean, just because a school becomes a charter school does not make it a good school; just because it is a choice school does not in and of itself make it a good school.

So what I am arguing is that we have got to support the changes that will make a difference for kids both inside and outside the existing system, but it is the existence of an option outside that will help you fight to make the improvements inside, because no matter what people say rhetoric-wise, I can tell you that as a superintendent, you can stand up and talk all you want about what needs to be done, but if people know that this is the only game in town, that there is absolutely nothing you can do other than run your mouth about what needs to happen, it is not going to happen for the majority of our kids.

But if parents like Ms. Ballard and Ms. Lewis and Ms. Stallworth all of a sudden have the option to say, Look, if you are not going to do well by my children, not only am I leaving—and many of you might not care that I am leaving—but when I leave, these dollars are going to go with me, if that is in the mix, you are going to have a different conversation about these parents' kids.

Senator HUTCHINSON. Dr. Fuller, as an advocate of private school choice and options, what do you see as the Federal role, if any, in promoting these kinds of options?

Mr. FULLER. I do not know. I like the idea of Federal scholarships that would be available to poor parents. I like the idea of the Federal Government using whatever bully pulpit it has. But to be very honest with you, I think this issue is going to be fought out locally, because in America, education is really a State function, and the reality of this is that our fight is going to be in our States. And I think it is important, both symbolically and to whatever extent materially the Federal Government can help, for you to have these discussions and to talk about the types of bills that Senator Coats has mentioned. But ultimately, frankly, the way our system is set up, this is really going to be determined locally.

Senator HUTCHINSON. Ms. Lewis, I think you mentioned that your organization intends to lobby the legislature. Do you see this primarily as a State issue, and what do you see as the Federal role?

Ms. LEWIS. Yes, our group sees it as a State issue. In Indiana, we are not looking at other school systems as far as your Washington, DC. system. We are basically concerned about our Indiana students. In Indianapolis, the schools are failing the students. Each year, we have more schools closing and more teachers laid off. We are looking at whether in 5 years there will even be a public school for children to go to.

We are more concerned with—the concerned parents of Indiana are trying to get our children to schools that will prepare them for a life in which they can succeed..

Yes, we believe it is State to State. What we want to ask here is, if you have any influence or any power to help us in the State on the Federal level, to give our State other options to approve this. That is what we need to know—or what we can do.

Senator HUTCHINSON. Ms. Stallworth, I have one final question for you. I think I understand your objection to the concept of scholarships, but we have a number of comparable-type programs for postsecondary education. In your testimony last year at a joint hearing of the House Subcommittees on Human Resources and Early Childhood, Youth and Families, you called educational vouchers "welfare"—welfare for private and parochial schools. What I am wondering is—we have the Pell Grant and Federal scholarship programs on the secondary level—would you characterize those important scholarship programs which are available for private and parochial secondary institutions as "welfare" as well? And if it works, and if it is good on the postsecondary level, why not also give that option to low-income families for K through 12?

Ms. STALLWORTH. Well, my opinion has not changed as far as what voucher programs will do, and——

Senator HUTCHINSON. Is it welfare for postsecondary—would it be welfare for the Pell Grant? Is it welfare for private schools with the Pell Grant?

Ms. STALLWORTH. Well, if we were in a debate about universities and colleges, I would probably talk with you about that a little more. But my concern right now is the majority of students who have not reached that level, and giving all students the ability, once they get there, if their parents need to apply for those types of programs, to apply for those programs when they graduate, matriculate, out of our public school system.

And I would like to think that our main goal is still all children in the public school system, giving them the opportunity to acquire the education necessary to attend a school once their parents reach the level of applying for things like Pell Grants. My concern is educating them well enough so that if the parents find it necessary to apply for those grants, they will have children well-educated enough to perform well when they reach that level.

I would also like to make a comment—we have talked a lot about changes. DC. public schools are changing. We have high schools that are creating smaller learning communities. One of the things that we have come up with and that has been mentioned at least by Dr. Fuller today is having enough teachers and the ability to pay the teachers to be able to have self-contained, small learning communities within our schools.

As far as school choice in Washington, DC., I find it interesting that we have almost every school choice program out there, and for some reason, it keeps being painted as if we do not, because we simply do not have vouchers. I think the argument has gotten down to where vouchers seem to be the only choice, and that is not true. We have many choices within our schools, and I will continue to fight so that all children have quality choices. I just do not see vouchers as "the" choice.

Senator HUTCHINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COATS. Thank you, Senator Hutchinson.

I want to thank the panel. Dr. Fuller, Pam Ballard, Ms. Stallworth and Ms. Lewis, this has been a very valuable panel, and you have all made contributions to our record. I think it is very important that we have had this dialogue and that we have asked the questions that we have, and I just want to thank each and every

one of you for your involvement toward achieving a common goal, that is, that we continue to focus on the educational needs of children and improve their opportunities for education.

I thank each of you for your lifelong commitment to that and for your willingness to testify before us this morning.

Thank you.

Our second panel consists of five individuals. The honorable Glenn Lewis is a State Representative from the State of Texas, a Democrat who represents the City of Fort Worth. We are also privileged to have Professor Alex Molnar of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, who has taught in that system as a professor of education since 1972, and also served as chief of staff for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction urban Initiative.

Our third witness on the panel is Zakiya Courtney, who is the director of Parents for School Choice, a grassroots organization founded by parents interested in expanding school choice in Milwaukee; Zakiya has also served as executive director of the Urban Day School in Milwaukee for the last 4 years.

We also welcome Commissioner Dolores Fridge of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Commissioner Fridge is a mother and a former public school teacher.

And finally, we welcome Dr. Paul Peterson from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, who has conducted studies on both the Milwaukee choice program and the Cleveland choice program. He has also been actively involved in the development of the New York City Private Scholarship Program.

I want to thank all the witnesses on the second panel for being with us today, and again, given the time that we used in the first panel, if you could summarize your statements, we will make sure that your full statements are included in the record and available to all members; but to the extent to which you can summarize your remarks and highlight them, it will leave us more time for discussion and questions.

Representative Lewis, why don't we start with you, and we will just proceed in the order in which I introduced the panel.

STATEMENTS OF GLENN LEWIS, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, FORT WORTH, TX; ALEX MOLNAR, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE, MILWAUKEE, WI; PAUL PETERSON, PROFESSOR, KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, CAMBRIDGE, MA; AND ZAKIYA COURTNEY, DIRECTOR, PARENTS FOR SCHOOL CHOICE, MILWAUKEE, WI; AND DOLORES FRIDGE, COMMISSIONER, MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ST. PAUL, MN

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, other members of the committee. I hope no one will be too disappointed if I do not stick to my prepared text, because everything I wanted to say has been said by the previous panel.

What I want to talk about now is, more specifically, the legislation that was proposed in the Texas House of Representatives which I supported and the provisions in it, and then I will entertain some questions if there are any, because I think it answers a lot of the concerns that we have about school choice.

The bill in Texas, which is not law in Texas—it failed by one vote at the House of Representatives; I do not know how well it would have done in the Senate because it did not get there—would provide for a pilot program—and I emphasize that, a pilot program, because no one is saying that school choice is the panacea that is going to fix all the ills in the public school system—what we are saying is that this is an option worth choosing now, an experiment, if you will. And experiment is not something that is not new to the public school system; it is not like we are experimenting with our kids' futures. That is all we have ever done in the public school system as long as I have been familiar with it; it has been one experiment after another, and we have never been averse to trying different things, new testing methods, new teaching methods, new everything. We have never been averse to doing that before, and I think it is time we take a look at this.

It would be a limited program that would use only 60 school districts in Texas—and trust me, 60 school districts in Texas hardly scratches the surface; Texas is a very large State with thousands of school districts. It would be a representative group of school districts as chosen by the University of North Texas Education Department, which is one of the better education departments at our State University, to make sure that it is a representative group of the districts in Texas. Out of those districts that are chosen to participate, each child will be given their pro rata share of the school district's budget, what they spend on each child, and 80 percent of that would move with the child, wherever the child goes, at the parents' discretion. Twenty percent would be retained in their assigned school because there are certain fixed costs that go on whether the child is there or not. Eighty percent would move with the child, and the parents would have the choice of moving him to another public school or a private school; it would be parental choice.

And with regard to special needs children, the school districts would be required to calculate how much they are spending on those kids now, and however much they are spending is how much that child's voucher would be worth. So in effect, the special needs kids would be worth more than the kids who do not have special needs, and we think that that would create some incentive on the part of different schools to want to provide programs to provide for these kids, because they would actually be worth more.

Also, with regard to the schools that choose to participate, private schools would not be required to participate. Those that choose to participate will have to abide by certain agreements. First, they would have to accept the voucher as full payment for the child. They could not say, okay, I want the voucher, and give us another $2,000 before you can bring your child here. They would have to accept that as full payment if they chose to participate.

Second, if they had more applicants than they had space available in their school, they could certainly give preference to children who were in the school previously, and they could give preference to children who had siblings in the school previously, but over and above that, they would have to use an approved, random lottery system to decide which students would get these seats where they have more applicants than space available.

Also, under our pilot program, only kids who are currently enrolled in public schools could participate, so we are not talking about people who already have their kids in private schools being able to redeem their money from the public school system. Only children who are currently enrolled in public schools would be allowed to participate.

That is briefly it in a nutshell, and I do not want to go on too long with my opening statement.

Thank you very much.

Senator COATS. Thank you very much. I appreciate you giving us the details of that program, and we thank you for your work with education and other issues in Texas.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lewis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE GLENN LEWIS OF TEXAS

I became an advocate for school choice during the 74th Legislative Session of the Texas House of Representatives during my first term in office. Although I am a democrat, I was in the minority of democrats, and one of only two African-American members of the legislature who supported the issue of school choice. A fellow legislator was pushing this initiative, and instead of just agreeing with him I decided to take an active role in passing this initiative rather than watching as the debate moved on I joined the debate, and will continue to do everything to fight for school choice because in my heart and mind I know it is the right thing to do.

My experience with the public schools in Texas has led me to believe that school choice is the best way to insure that our children are educated adequately enough to compete in the twenty-first century. I grew up in Fort Worth, Texas—the same community that I now represent. There were ten children in my family which was headed by my mother, who became a single parent as a result of divorce. My childhood was not easy, but through it all, my mother consistently reinforced the idea that an education was key to a better way of life. She, believed that, and convinced us to believe that if you educated yourself then that education would change your life; that education would change the life of your children, your grandchildren, and ultimately, it would change the entire fortunes of your whole family.

Unfortunately if I told my kids these same things and sent them to almost any of the schools in my district; I would not only be doing them a disservice, I would be lying to them. A school used to be more than a building with the name "school" on it. School, at least when I was growing up, was a place where the teachers and administrators actually cared about the children they taught. It was a place where the teachers and administrators understood what the children's needs were and were willing to make the effort to respond to those needs. Public schools have ceased to be such places—they no longer respond to the needs of most of the children, the parents, or the communities which they serve. It could be that public education has become such a large bureaucracy and is so highly politicized that it is impossible to respond to the needs of these individuals. Maybe there is a lack of zeal today on behalf of the school officials which prevents them from truly educating this young generation. To me, the reasons do not matter; what matters is that the educational needs vital to the success of our youth are not being met.

Last year citizens in Dallas began bringing guns to the local school board meetings. That is an extreme example of how off the track our educational system has become. I am not justifying such a drastic act as carrying guns to school board meetings, but these people were desperate to force the school board to be responsive to their concerns about their children's education. They felt that nothing was being done to meet the needs of their children and that their last recourse was to bring guns to school board meetings. The idea that people are that desperate, that hungry to obtain a quality education for their children is a strong indication that something is fatally wrong with the present school system. It also reveals just how far off the mark we have gotten when if comes to educating our children; a service that is supposed to be provided by our government.

I have debated a number of my colleagues who oppose this issue. I have examined their reasons for saying "NO" to school choice. They have yet to convince me that leaving the public school "as is" is the best way to serve our children. The opposition argues that only a few will be allowed to seek an alternative form of education, and that when they do, they will take their share of the public dollars with them, leaving the rest of the children behind in a school system further depleted by the drain-

age of resources and talent. It is their view that the schools will perform worse than they do now. My retort is that they underestimate the resolve of parents and the community. From the Dallas example I have shown that people value education for their children and will do whatever they can to obtain a quality education for their children. However, I don't think we should force people to take up arms to do so.

If you are not convinced that the time for change is now, ask the people you represent. I have asked my constituents if they want to choose the kind of education that their children receive. A majority of them said yes. They represent those who are not afraid to move in a new direction if it means a better education for their children. It is important to point out that the school system is educating three types of students. First, there is one group that no matter what type of school you put them in, their natural. god-given talents will allow them to succeed. The second group is the polar opposite: no matter what learning environment you put them in, they will not be reached. These two groups represent extremes, and consist of only a few of the students actually in our public schools. The third group represents the vast majority of public school students—students whose educational environment and opportunities make the difference in whether they succeed in life or not. And these are the students that we are failing to reach or losing to crime, drugs, teenage pregnancy, or truancy. These are the students that we should concentrate on saving.

The bottom line is that a parent should have a choice in the kind of education and quality of education that their children receive, and the government should provide them with the ability to send them to the schools of their choice. I strongly believe that parents ought to be able to have the choice of deciding what schools to send their kids to. I am aware that all people are not the same, and, therefore, may not desire the same things for their children. That is why I think it is imperative that we make allowances for some individuality and some creativity within our educational system. School choice fosters that goal. The idea of sending my children into a school (where they spend more waking hours than they do at home) in which I have no control over the curriculum or where my parental input is not welcomed frightens me.

I believe that this school choice initiative gives us the opportunity to have creative input in and regain adequate control over the educational system that serves our children.

Senator COATS. Professor Molnar, thank you for appearing here today.

Mr. MOLNAR. Senator Coats, thank you for the honor of appearing before the committee.

Let me tell you a little bit about my background. As you mentioned in your opening comments, I have been a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for 25 years, and in that capacity, I have been in and out of Milwaukee public schools; I have worked with Milwaukee public school teachers; I have helped educate school administrators not only in Milwaukee but around the State of Wisconsin.

My particular field of academic expertise is urban education. That requires me to read and digest an awful lot of research. And certainly over the last decade or so, the area of urban education has been an area that has not only been filled with controversy, but it has been filled with conflicting reports of research findings, and this is especially the case now in Milwaukee with regard to the voucher experiment.

I feel very strongly about the Milwaukee public schools and the job they have been doing for children. My son Alex is a graduate of Jackie Robinson Middle School in Milwaukee, and I know the quality of education that he received there.

I also know that it is wise to set out to discuss vouchers in a way that is nonpartisan. I think it is too often polarized. For example, in Pennsylvania 2 years ago, it was the Republican legislature that killed the voucher proposal proposed by the Republican Governor of Pennsylvania. So I would like to say from the outset that the extent to which we can continue this as a bipartisan dialogue about

what is best for the schoolchildren who attend urban schools, most of them quite poor, the better off we will all be.

Now, with regard to the matter of research, the Milwaukee voucher experiment was set up as an experiment. That is one of the reasons why it passed constitutional muster in the first place when it was initially challenged, because the U.S. Supreme Court held that the information that that experiment yielded may be of some benefit to children in places other than Milwaukee, and therefore, it allowed what would have been ruled unconstitutional as a local bill to proceed.

There have been five evaluations of the Milwaukee voucher experiment by John Witte, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee; I have read those research reports. More recently, there has been a reanalysis of Witte's data, and I want to emphasis that point. When we talk about the research that has been reported by Professor Peterson, who shares this panel with me this morning, and more recent research by Professor Rouse from Princeton, what we are talking about is a reanalysis of the data gathered by John Witte, and what we are also talking about is a different approach to analyzing the data gathered by John Witte.

Professor Peterson and Professor Rouse each had slightly different methods of approaching those data. It is not the case, as Professor Peterson asserted in a letter to the editor of The Washington Post, that his research findings were replicated by Professor Rouse of Princeton.

Now, I have several problems with the assertions being made on the part of those who support vouchers based on the Peterson and the Rouse research, and I would be happy to go into that in detail under questioning. It has to do with the number of students that are actually used to derive the results that are reported—in some instances, we are talking about 26 students. The Milwaukee voucher program has about an 85 percent attrition rate—that is, about 85 percent of the students who started at the beginning of the program were no longer there 5 years later—so we have a very, very small number of students.

And I realize that we have a limited number of tax dollars, and the budget agreement certainly highlights one thing if it highlights anything at all, and that is the difficulty of reaching an agreement on the priorities for spending those tax dollars. To that extent, I have an answer for Professor Fuller with regard to whose money is it—I believe it is the taxpayers' money. Therefore, I believe that when we are talking about public school policy and the way in which we spent money, we are talking about every citizen of this country, not just people who happen for a period of time to have their children in public schools. I believe public schools are all of our concern as citizens and as taxpayers of this country.

Now, then, without going into the details of my criticism of the analysis done by Professor Peterson and Professor Rouse, let me just ask: Within an environment in which you have to make choices and you cannot do everything, why would you choose vouchers as the way to spend your money?

In Cleveland in fiscal year 1996, the budget for kindergarten children attending nonmagnet schools was eliminated—it was

eliminated. For the $5.2 million that the voucher experiment cost, 70 percent of those children could have attended kindergarten. Nineteen hundred children participated in the voucher experiment. Approximately 67 percent of those children were either kindergartners or private school students; only about 33 percent were actually Cleveland public school students.

What would you say if I said I have a piece of research that did not involve 100 students or 23 students; I have a piece of research which the American Academy of Arts and Sciences—in fact, Professor Mosteller from Harvard University, speaking for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences—called "the great education experiment of this century," where 6,500 hundred students, genuinely in the scientific and precise sense of the words, "controlled and randomized study," found achievement gains for students that were three times the achievement gains reported by Professor Peterson in his most optimistic assessment. That is, if we took it at face value, these achievement gains were three times those achievement gains. You would probably say: Gee whiz, why aren't we doing that?

My answer to that is we are not doing that in my judgment because it costs money to do that. The research I am talking about is the Tennessee Star study research on the impact of class size on children, kindergarten through third grade,and those researchers have been following the effects of that study since 1984. We now have good long-term data on the lasting impact of this.

I can see the red light, so let me just say one of my degrees is in history, and during the Second World War, this country did itself proud by launching a liberty ship a day to carry war materiel to wage that war successfully in Asia and in Europe; and I see now reason why this country cannot muster the political will to build small schools with small classes, preschool through third grade, all over inner cities in this country. It would be an investment that would pay us off over and over and over again. I hope we can get to the point where we can talk about reforms like that later on in the panel.

Senator COATS. Thank you, Professor Molnar.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Molnar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALEX MOLNAR

Mr. Chairman, Senator Kennedy, and other distinguished members of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Committee today to testify on improving educational opportunities for low-income children.

I am a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. My most recent books are The Construction of Children's Character (National Society for the Study of Education) and Giving Kids the Business: The Commercialization of America's Schools (Westview/Harper Collins, 1996), which contains a review of the history of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program From 1993–1995 I served as Chief of Staff for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Urban Initiative and from 1992–1995 I served as a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Urban Education Advisory Board.

There is no greater investment that we can make than improving education for all children. However, political solutions that offer false hope such as private school vouchers are the wrong answers. Public schools can work—and most often they do. In my judgment, private school vouchers are an impediment to genuine school reform.

As testimony, I submit the following article that will be printed in the Commentary section of Education Week on August 6, 1997:

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Once upon a time, the mention of Milwaukee may have conjured up images of beer, bratwurst, motorcycles, Fonzie the good-hearted delinquent from "Happy Days," and a couple of working-class women called Laverne and Shirley. These days, Milwaukee is more likely to be associated with the nation's first private-school-voucher experiment, a program whose alleged success is now being touted as a justifications for establishing similar voucher "experiments" around the country.

Billed as a model urban school reform by its supporters when it was passed in 1990, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program was supposed to increase file academic performance of poor children, "empower" their parents, and force the Milwaukee public schools to improve, by threatening them with competition. Despite its small size (no more than approximately 1,600 students have ever been enrolled at one time) and lack of clear academic benefits, the Milwaukee program continues to make big waves in educational policy circles. The "success" of Milwaukee's program is now cited as a reason to support SB 1, the proposed Safe and Affordable Schools Act, and HR 103, the American Community Renewal Act, both of which seek to provide federal funds to support private-school-voucher programs.

Until last year, one of the biggest problems voucher proponents faced when making their case was the failure of the five annual evaluations of the Milwaukee program, conducted between 1991 and 1995 by University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor John Witte, to find any achievement advantage for students attending voucher schools. However, on August 14, 1996, in a Wall Street Journal oped piece entitled "School Choice Data Rescued From Bad Science," Jay Greene of the University of Houston and Paul Peterson of Harvard University claimed that their reanalysis of data gathered by Mr. Witte revealed that, after three to four years in Milwaukee's voucher program, students scored higher in math and in reading than students who had applied for the voucher program but were not admitted. According to Messrs. Greene and Peterson, these differences in achievement were "substantially significant." An important-sounding characterization with no precise research meaning. (See Education Week, Sept. 4, 1996, and related story, page XX.)

The case for vouchers seemed to strengthen further when a second reanalysis of the Witte data conducted by Cecilia Rouse of Princeton University purported to show an academic advantage for Milwaukee voucher students in math. Ms. Rouse's work was brought to national attention on January 21, 1997, in a Wall Street Journal op-ed essay by Howard Fuller, Milwaukee's African-American former school superintendent. Mr. Fuller, now a distinguished professor of education at Marquette University, cited both the Greene, Peterson, and Du reanalysis and the Rouse reanalyses of John Witte's data to argue that "our courts and elected officials need to pursue every path to let this experiment continue."

Mr. Fuller's views are consistent with the shifting position of some elite opinion makers on the issue publicly funded vouchers. In a New York Times editorial last April entitled "Philadelphia School Wars," Brent Staples concluded that if Philadelphia Superintendent David W. Hornbeck failed to reform that city's schools, "vouchers could be the next stop." Several weeks later, The New York Times, drawing on the Greene, Peterson, Du reanalysis of Mr. Witte's data, concluded editorially that "the Milwaukee data should serve notice on the teacher's union—and large, urban districts everywhere—that if the schools do not improve quickly, vouchers could become irresistible." On May 5, the Annie B. Casey Foundation joined the fray, arguing in its "Kids Count Data Book" that school choice should be among the nontraditional options and approaches considered to increase the school performance of children living in poverty. And in his second New York Times editorial on the subject on May 15, Brent Stapes argued that although "an early study" (presumably John Witte's five annual evaluations) showed no academic advantage for Milwaukee's voucher students, "two better designed studies [actually reanalyses of data derived from Mr. Witte's study]—one from Harvard University, the second from Princeton—showed that the voucher students improved appreciably in math." Disconcertingly, in the same editorial, Mr. Staples mangled a number of facts about the situation in Milwaukee, apparently for the purpose of discrediting Milwaukee's public school system—a common tactic among some voucher supporters. He claimed, for example, that the existence of public Montessori schools is a result of competition from the voucher program. In fact, Milwaukee has had public Montessori schools since 1976—15 years before the voucher program was implemented. He also claimed that "half the seats" in some Milwaukee magnet schools were "reserved for whites." Wrong again. Milwaukee's desegregation guidelines call for desegregated schools to be between 30 percent and 70 percent African-American, and no school in the system reserves "half the seats" for whites.

The problems with the Greene, Peterson, and Du reanalysis of the Milwaukee data are manifold. For example, their own tables (specifically 4, 5, and 6) do not support their claims about reading achievement or, in some instances, about math

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achievement either. Furthermore, the number of students involved is so small (as few as 26 cases) that any claims about the significance of their findings must be viewed with considerable suspicion. In Ms. Rouse's case, she writes that ". . . I estimate that private school students gained approximately 1.3 percentage points per year (in math and reading combined) and the effect has a p-value of 0.063." Since the standard protocol for statistical significance is 0.05 or lower one must wonder just what Ms. Rouse has demonstrated. She goes on to say that she "had to impute the total math score for a significant fraction of Milwaukee public school students," that there was "substantial sample attrition in later years," and that her statistical strategies "cannot substitute for better data." It is hard to see how evidence this weak suggests that a nationwide experiment with taxpayer-financed vouchers is either a good way to improve the quality of education for poor children or a wise use of public money. Nevertheless, the shift of elite opinion toward vouchers continues. William Raspberry, for example, picked up the "let's experiment" refrain in a June 16, 1997, Washington Post column.

Exotic statistical treatments deployed in an attempt to divine the putative academic benefits conferred by Milwaukee's voucher program may be useful in confusing editorial writers, but they can reveal nothing about the more important political lesson to be drawn from Milwaukee's experience with vouchers. That lesson is now emerging as the coalition that successfully created the voucher program in Milwaukee crumbles.

The pro-voucher coalition has always had a diverse cast of characters representing a volatile combination of interests. The author of the 1990 voucher bill, Annette "Polly" Williams, an African-American Democratic member of the Wisconsin Assembly, saw her voucher plan as a way of supporting African-American community schools and weakening the hold that white-dominated institutions had over the education of black children. To Michael Joyce, the president of Milwaukee's right-wing Bradley Foundation, the voucher program represented a step toward the sort of unrestricted, free market plan first envisioned by economist Milton Friedman. Polly Williams gave the program legitimacy as an effort to empower poor (primarily African-American) parents, and Michael Joyce provided millions of dollars to help keep the program visible and the public-policy pot boiling. Wisconsin's conservative Republican governor, Tommy Thompson, and Milwaukee's "New Democrat" mayor, John Norquist, provided a bipartisan cheerleading squad. For Gov. Thompson, vouchers fit nicely in the general privatisation and deregulatory trajectory he has charted for Wisconsin's public institutions. For Mayor Norquist, the voucher program offers a chance to stem white flight—if students attending Milwaukee's overwhelmingly white Roman Catholic school system become eligible for taxpayer-financed vouchers. And for the Catholic Church, vouchers are a potentially vital fiscal lifeline.

In 1995, with Republicans in control of both Wisconsin legislative chambers and the Milwaukee business community solidly on board, voucher supporters succeeded in passing legislation that included religious schools in the program and in removing all limits on the number of low-income students who could participate. At the same time, the troublesome evaluation component of the program was eliminated, effectively destroying the program's value as an experiment, and revealing how cynically the "let's experiment" argument 15 used by many voucher advocates.

In the midst of this political success, the voucher coalition began to come unglued. Although the program's expansion to include religious schools was almost immediately blocked in court, the program's maximum enrollment was allowed to rise to 15,000 (only about 1,600 students actually enrolled) and the percentage of voucher students that a school could enroll was no longer limited. In short order, two new voucher schools failed, with allegations of inflated enrollment figures and missing or fraudulent financial data being widely reported. And some voucher parents began to complain about supplementary fees and demands to raise funds for or provide services to the schools their children attended, practices that created an economic barrier for poor parents who wanted to participate in the program.

Shortly after the 1995 expansion of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program was ruled unconstitutional by a Wisconsin circuit court on January 15, 1997, Williams was ready with her own revision of Wisconsin's voucher legislation. Ms. Williams' bill does not include religious schools and restores provisions intended to better monitor the fiscal affairs and administrative practices of voucher schools. She was immediately opposed by erstwhile allies such as the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, and the Bradley Foundation-funded Partners Advancing Values a Education (formerly the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Education Foundation) scholarship program. Bradley Foundation President Joyce (who once claimed that "the Lord God" had led him to support Ms. Williams) and former Superintendent Fuller, who has close ties to both the Bradley Founda-

tion and Milwaukee's white business establishment, remained uncharacteristically quiet about Ms. Williams' legislative proposals. Even the normally loquacious Tommy Thompson and John Norquist could find little to say about her efforts.

According to longtime Williams aide Larry Harwell, a takeover of the voucher agenda by free market ideologues and Catholics would threaten the principles that have guided the program from its inception. Mr. Harwell is right to be concerned, but it is too late—the agenda is already out of Polly Williams' hands. An angry Ms. Williams told the education journal Rethinking Schools "When I formed a coalition with Tim Sheehy [the president of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce] and the Catholic archdiocese, and those people who say they supported us, I did so because it was a way of helping my parents. I knew all along they didn't care about my children; They cared about their agenda."

The Milwaukee voucher program has allowed a small number of poor parents to send their children to private schools, but it has failed to deliver the educational benefits supporters claimed for it. The most important lesson to be learned from Milwaukee's experience is not educational, but political. It's a lesson in how the white power structure has used the Milwaukee program to advance an agenda that has little if anything, to do with the needs of impoverished African-American children. As a disgusted Polly Williams told Rethinking Schools, "If they really cared about our community the way they say, we would not be in such dire need right now. They have all the power and money in their hands. They could help make the conditions better in our community. But they don't."

IN MY OPINION

PAVE can't have it both ways

Education group should either be a charity or operate a political front

By Alex Molnar

Wisconsin residents should take a critical look at the role Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) plays in the fight over taxpayer-financed vouchers. Formerly the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Education Foundation, PAVE raises money to provide scholarship support to low-income students who want to attend private, non-sectarian or religious schools in Milwaukee.

Molnar

On the one hand, PAVE is a private charity with a traditional charitable mission that appeals to many people. On the other hand, it is a political front used to promote the expansion of Milwaukee's parental choice program to include religious schools.

PAVE's political agenda may be explained by the fact that its largest benefactor, by far, is Milwaukee's right-wing Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.

Bradley Foundation President Michael Joyce makes no bones about his support for a taxpayer-funded private school voucher program that includes religious schools and that has no limits on the income of participating families. The ban on religious school participation in Milwaukee's voucher program is, at the moment, the biggest obstacle standing between Joyce and his goal. This helps explain PAVE's importance to him.

Terry Moe of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, who writes approvingly about PAVE in his new book "Private Vouchers," makes the point clearly: "Politically, (the private voucher movement) ... adds new force to the larger movement for school choice nationwide — recruiting new activists, mobilizing new constituencies, bringing new pressures to bear."

The sort of universal, unregulated voucher plan Joyce favors would have disastrous consequences for the impoverished children PAVE claims it wants to help. Just consider the numbers. In grades K-12, there are about 850,000 children enrolled in public schools. State equalized aid to public schools totals approximately $3,150 million. Thus, the average amount of state aid for each child now attending a public school is roughly $3,700.

There are about 137,000 children enrolled in private schools in Wisconsin. If every child currently attending a private school were to receive a state-financed voucher, one of two things would occur. The state would have to increase education spending by more than $500 million to provide $3,700 in aid for every child now in a private school, or if the amount of education spending remained constant but every child now attending a private school had a claim on it, the amount of money spent on each student currently enrolled in a public school would have to be reduced by a little more than $500.

Poor children would be most harmed by such a reduction in funding. In Milwaukee, the school system would find itself with more than $50 million less than it now has to educate its roughly 100,000 students.

As a way of promoting the voucher agenda, PAVE uses its program evaluation to find ways to make the case that the private schools PAVE students attend do a better job than Milwaukee public schools. For example, PAVE claimed in a Sept. 23 press release that its most recent evaluation showed that " ... PAVE's schools have substantially lower rates (6%) of student mobility than do the Milwaukee public schools (30%)."

The press release left out some important details. For example, only 18 elementary schools serving about 41% of PAVE-supported students in 1995-'96 were compared to the mobility rate for all Milwaukee public elementary schools during the preceding year, 1994-'95. These deficiencies make the results reported highly questionable at best and meaningless at worst.

To their credit, the authors of the evaluation were appropriately cautious about their findings. They indicated that only PAVE participants who could be reached by phone were surveyed, that they did not have a representative sample and that their findings may be skewed.

However, such caution does not serve PAVE's political purpose well. Not surprisingly, no hint of the very limited value of the evaluation results was contained in PAVE's press release.

Providing money to poor families wanting to send their children to private schools is laudatory. Using PAVE to promote a political agenda that will inevitably harm far more poor children than PAVE can ever help is another matter altogether. PAVE's board should decide if it wants to run a charity or operate a political front. It's high time that PAVE stopped having it both ways.

Alex Molnar, of Shorewood, is a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee education professor.

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EVEN PRAYER IS UNLIKELY TO SAVE THE EXPANSION OF THE MILWAUKEE PARENTAL CHOICE PROGRAM.

Alex Molnar

A good many conservatives are probably having night sweats over developements in San Francisco. It seems that the city of San Francisco now requires that any entity that contracts with the city to perform a service must provide the same fringe benefits for domestic partners that it provides for spouses. In other words gay couples can no longer be discriminated against by anyone who does business with the city.

Catholic dogma holds that homosexuality is a sin. Catholic charities is one of the largest providers of contract social services in San Francisco. And therein lies the rub. (Insert name) the Archbishop of the San Francisco diocese says Catholic charities can not violate Catholic religious teaching by providing fringe benefits to domestic partners. San Francisco mayor Willie (check spelling) Brown says that if the Catholic Church accepts money from the city of San Francisco it will have to obey the law. In other words, "render unto Caesar...."

The conflict in San Francisco helps clarify why Republicans are breaking into warring factions over private school vouchers. Some see access to tax dollars as a way of saving religious schools unable to raise enough money from the faithful to survive, others see vouchers as device for dismantling public education and driving down its cost. However, there are also those who fear the specter of government control following closely behind government voucher money. For them, the story unfolding in San Francisco is their worst nightmare.

Given these internal tensions among conservatives it is not surprising that a legal mechanism for spending tax payer dollars without having government control over how the money is spent is the holy grail for voucher zealots such as Michael Joyce of the Bradley Foundation and the leadership of the Christian Coalition. This is the reason why the architects of the law that expanded the Milwaukee Parental Choice to include religious schools took great pains to create the fiction that state aid to sectarian schools participating in the program was really going to parents and was only "indirectly" aid to religious schools where their children were enrolled.

On January 15 Dane County Circuit Court Judge Paul B. Higginbotham blew this ruse out of the water when he concluded that the expanded choice program would send millions of tax dollars to pervasively sectarian religious institutions and held that "...the state cannot do indirectly what it cannot do directly."

Supporters of the expanded program argued that they had not really expected to prevail in Higginbotham's court and would slog on through the appeals process toward what they believe will be victory in the long haul. Maybe. However, anyone who read Higginbotham's decision would skeptical of their claims.

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Consider the language of Article I, section 18 of the Wisconsin Constitution:

> The right of every person to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of conscience shall never be infringed; nor shall any person be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, without consent (emphasis added); nor shall any control of, or interference with, the rights of conscience be permitted, or any preference be given by law to any religious establishment, or modes of worship; nor shall any money be drawn from the treasury for the benefit of religious societies, or religious or theological seminaries (emphasis added).

Judge Higgenbotham held that the educational programs of elementary and secondary schools run by religious organizations can not be separated from the religious purposes of those organizations and that, therefore, they must be considered religious or theological seminaries under the Wisconsin Constitution. To support his conclusion Higginbotham quoted from the mission statements of several sectarian schools that would have been eligible to receive taxpayer dollars under the expanded choice program. Here a some of the examples the judge cited:

> The continuing purpose of St. Matthew Ev. Lutheran Church and School is to go and tell the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ for the conversion of unbelievers and the strengthening of believers in faith and Christian living.
>
> We believe our school exists to carry out the Savior's command to "go and make disciples..."(Fairview Lutheran School).
>
> A prospective student whose parents are not members of a church will be considered as mission prospects. (Christ Lutheran Church/School).
>
> The mission of St. Leo and St. Rose Catholic schools is to share in the parish evangelization effort through providing quality Catholic education in grades pre-kindergarten through eight.
>
> The Yeshiva Elementary School of Milwaukee was initiated by members of the Orthodox Jewish Community...in order to provide the excellence in Orthodox Jewish Education which will prepare our children to attend the finest seminaries, Yeshivas and institutions of Jewish higher learning.

Given these clear religious purposes and given the clear constitutional prohibition against drawing money from the state treasury to benefit "religious societies or religious or theological seminaries" its hard to imagine a way of including religious schools in Milwaukee's choice program that will pass constitutional muster in Wisconsin.

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HIGH TIME FOR REAL REFORM

Alex Molnar

The tacit assumption lying close to the surface of most of what passes for debate about improving public schools is that we can school reform ourselves into a full employment economy with a rising standard of living. In the service of this assumption various reformers tell us that students must master computer technology, pass rigorous proficiency tests, learn to diagram sentences, memorize state capitals, cooperate, compete, sound out words, be faithful, loyal, honest and make a smooth transition from school to work. The sad truth is, however, that, no k-12 school reform will produce full employment. In fact, the Federal Reserve Board is quite prepared to throw millions of people (even those who can diagram sentences or know how to use a computer) out of work by raising interest rates if the national unemployment threatens to dip below 5 percent.

The wrong headed supply side labor theory (i.e., give them the training and the jobs will appear) that energizes so much school reform rhetoric distorts the civic purposes of public education and keeps the focus on what schools can not do – create a full employment economy. As a result, corporate America and our political leaders are able to escape responsibility for doing nothing about the disastrous rise in inequality in the United States over the past twenty-five years and the role schools might play in responding the ongoing crisis of childhood poverty is overlooked..

As imperfect as they are, schools are doing a better job of serving the children who attend them and the communities in which they are located than either the private sector or most other governmental agencies. This is especially true in impoverished communities. In Milwaukee, for example, the childhood poverty rate has risen faster than any other of the nations fifty largest cities. The single indicator of child well being in which Milwaukee was not in the lower half of the fifty cities studied by the Annie E. Casey Foundation was the Milwaukee high school drop out rate. That's right, the high school drop out rate of the much maligned Milwaukee public schools.

Stung by the Casey study, the Norquist Administration trotted out David Riemer, its director of the Department of Administration, to point out that: "These are national problems. That's the point that's missed. Poverty is basically driven by state and particularly federal policies, and poverty is driving all of this." No kidding. For once, the Norquist administration got it right. Too bad they haven't figured out that poverty has something to do with school performance. Or, perhaps more to the point, too bad they continue to dabble on about private and religious school choice instead of getting behind school reforms that would actually have an immediate positive impact on children's well being.

For example, it would be hard to find anyone who has spent time studying primary education that would not agree that small schools with small classes are superior to large schools with large classes. Research shows that the benefits of small classes in grades k-3 with

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children throughout their school careers. However, most parents don't need research reports to convince them. All things being equal, they will choose a small class at a small school every time they get a chance. In fact, supporters of private school choice often mention small classes and small schools as a reason why they want to send their children to a choice school. Unfortunately, even if the choice legislation were to pass constitutional muster, in Milwaukee only about 6,500 children could find places in private and religious schools. What about the others?

It is past the time when empty political gestures like allowing the Milwaukee Common Council to charter a school or empty headed political rhetoric over "standards" can substitute for a serious commitment to children and the communities in which they live. It is time to start building small schools for grades k-3 all over Wisconsin. Schools in which no child will be in a class with more than 14 other children. Schools that would be located close to where children live so that parents can easily visit and, if they chose, get involved with their child's education.

These small schools would be cheap since they would require no specialized facilities. They could easily be made handicapped accessible. And they could be built according to a few basic architectural plans. Furthermore, building these schools would have the effect of lowering the enrollment of existing schools. And who would argue that building the schools and staffing them, if properly done, would not make a significant contribution to the economic life of the communities in which they were located. There is plenty of talent in our colleges and universities and in the business community capable of taking up the challenge of helping to design and plan these schools. Now that the architect of the Brewers Stadium deal - Jim Klauser - is available, perhaps he would bend his considerable talent and use his immmerable connections for this important public purpose.

All that is missing is the political imagination necessary to launch the effort. Is anyone in Milwaukee or Madison still capable of dreaming?

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Senator COATS. I think I am going to deviate a little bit from the order, because I think it might be appropriate to let Dr. Peterson respond immediately following Mr. Molnar's presentation, since you were part of that presentation.

So we will just go a little bit out of order and let you respond at this point and then proceed to Ms. Courtney after that.

Thank you for being here.

Mr. PETERSON. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this committee on this exceedingly important issue, and I think it is really a very important opportunity for the Senate of the United States to consider one of the most significant issues in the United States today, that is, the education of minority poor children in our central cities. There is hardly a problem that is more severe than that one.

It is really striking when you look at the research how consistently a broad range of studies point to the same conclusion, and that conclusion is that when poor minority families in central cities say they want choice, these people are not stupid. They are smart. They know that the system they have now has failed, and all the evidence out there suggests they are right to expect that if they are given a choice, their children will learn more.

Sixty percent of the advantaged whites in this country favor a choice program according to a recent study at Stanford University, but 80 percent of the low-income minority families in our central cities feel this way about choice. So the support is particularly strong in our central cities, particularly strong among minorities, particularly strong among poor people, and it is particularly strong for a very good reason. It is strong for the reason that where students have a choice, they learn more.

There are studies that go back to the 1970's, beginning with the great sociologist James Coleman, which showed that poor children learned more in Catholic schools than in public schools. Tony Bryke at the University of Chicago found the same thing. Terry Moe and John Chubb at the Brookings Institution found the same thing.

In Milwaukee, we had an opportunity for the first time to look at the results from a randomized experiment where a lot of methodological problems can be addressed as they are in medical research. In medical research, you always want to have randomized experiments before you market a drug. None of the earlier studies had that advantage, and in Milwaukee, we did have that advantage. Unfortunately, the first study, the one by John Witte, did not take advantage of the fact that this was a randomized experiment. Cecilia Rouse's analysis and the analysis that Jay Greene and I did take advantage of that, and what we found was—and here, Cecilia Rouse and we agree almost exactly—that very substantial gains in math scores obtained such that if you could generalize this throughout the country, you could reduce by one-half the difference between white and minority test scores in mathematics.

Now, that is not just our study in Milwaukee. We also found that data in Cleveland are less scientifically well-grounded because we do not have a randomized experiment in Cleveland, although we will have more data later on which might shed further light on the

subject; but the early results from Cleveland are also very positive, with very striking gains once again in mathematics.

But there are other studies out there as well. there are studies in San Antonio and in Indianapolis which show similar gains. That is to say there is a broad range of studies out there.

There is also a new set of studies out about if you go to a private school are you more likely to complete high school and go on to college, and one of the most careful of these studies was done at the University of Chicago by Derek Neal, and he found that the probability of graduating from college if you are an urban minority student increases from 11 percent to 27 percent if you went to a Catholic high school—from 11 percent to 27 percent. And two other studies showed the same thing, so that even John Witte, no friend of choice, says that it indicates a substantial private school advantage in terms of completing high school and enrolling in college.

The evidence is really very substantial. Parents love their private schools; if given the choice, parents love their private schools. There is not a study out there that does not say that. And recently, we have new data that suggests—that tells us—it does not suggest, it tells us—that private schools are less segregated than public schools, that fights between racial groups are less in private schools than in public schools, that cross-racial friendships are more likely in private schools that in public schools, that kids volunteer more if they go to a private school, that kids think they should volunteer more, that the schools expect them to volunteer more. There is a lot of emphasis on volunteering today, and the evidence from a national study shows that private schools are the mechanism for achieving this.

Now, I do not want to say that we should move overnight to a wholesome choice program, but I do say this, that when all the evidence points so consistently that you can help out poor minorities in our central cities, why would you not try to get better data?

Mr. Molnar does not believe any study that has ever found that private schools are better than public schools. Every, single study he has read has some flaw, some terrible, terrible defect. And I am sure he will find that flaw in the studies that are produced in the future. But more careful studies can be designed. All studies do have flaws, and one should never rely on any one study to reach a major policy conclusion. But when you do have a number of studies that point in the same direction, then let us ask, should not the United States Congress authorize a very careful study that could subject this matter to a test or a series of demonstrations around the country.

This was raised by Senator Hutchinson just a few minutes ago—what is the Federal role. Well, the Federal role in education should be research to point the way to what can be done by State and local governments. Only the Federal Government can finance major research activity, and that is what is the appropriate Federal role in this case.

Since my time is up, let me just conclude by saying that research is very indicative; it is not definitive at this point in time. Let us have some more experiments. How can one be against learning more about a question that is so important to the children living in our central cities?

Thank you.

Senator COATS. Thank you very much, Dr. Peterson.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Peterson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL E. PETERSON

School Choice for Low-Income Residents of Central Cities:

Research Findings and Policy Recommendation

Executive summary

School choice is particularly popular among low-income, minority families living in central cities. The enthusiasm of low income families is well founded. Recent research suggests that children from poor, minority families are especially likely to benefit from the opportunity to choose a school, public or private, religious or secular. Even when taking into account differences in family background, students from disadvantaged homes score higher on mathematics and reading tests if they attend private schools. They are also more likely to finish high school and graduate from college. Their parents are more satisfied with their child's educational experiences. They are less likely to attend racially isolated schools, more likely to form inter-racial friendships, and more likely to volunteer for community-spirited activities.

Although recent research suggests many positive benefits from introducing a school choice program, the studies provide suggestive, not definitive, findings. In the field of medicine, comparable results from preliminary studies with respect to any particular treatment program would lead responsible officials to institute a series of randomized experiments to test the effectiveness of the program. The same responsible, scientific approach should be taken in the field of education. To enhance the educational well-being of poor, minority children living in central cities, Congress should set up a series of demonstration programs that can establish definitively the benefits of school choice for this population. There is no better place to begin than in the District of Columbia, where Congress has a particular responsibility.

School Choice for LoW-Income Residents of Central Cities:

Research Findings and Policy Recommendation

School choice is particularly popular among low-income, minority families living in central cities. The enthusiasm of low income families is wall founded. Recent research suggests that children from poor, minority families are especially likely to benefit from the opportunity to choose a school, public or private, religious or secular. Even when taking into account differences in family background, students from disadvantaged families score higher on mathematics and reading tests if they attend private schools. They are also more likely to finish high school and graduate from college. Their parents are more satisfied with their child's educational experiences. They are less likely to attend racially segregated schools, more likely to form interracial friendships, and more likely to volunteer for community-spirited activities.

Critics of school choice claim that many of these findings are due to the family background of the students attending private schools, not to the quality of the educational experience in school. But careful studies examining this question indicate that it is the private schools themselves, not the characteristics of the students attending them, that are the primary source of the benefits gained from enrollment in private schools. The weight of the evidence is now such that Congress should establish a series of school choice demonstration programs. Such demonstration programs could provide more definitive information on the benefits of school choice as well as the advantages and disadvantages of specific choice programs. The District of Columbia, for which Congress has a special responsibility, is a strong candidate for a school choice demonstration program. Students in public schools in the District are performing poorly, have limited choices, and suffer from severe racial isolation. Similar demonstrations should also be undertaken in other large, central cities.

School choice demonstration programs in the District of Columbia and elsewhere should be designed as randomized experiments so that the effects of school choice on students and families living in large central cities can be carefully evaluated. Randomized experiments provide the greatest potential for obtaining high quality information on school choice, because those selected into school choice programs can be compared to an essentially similar population. Since randomized experiments are lotteries that treat all applicants for a school choice program equally, they also provide a fair way of increasing educational opportunities for inner-city families.

As of now, data is available from only one randomized experiment in school choice, the publicly-funded program in Milwaukee. A privately-funded school choice program in New York city, also designed as a randomized experiment, was announced by Mayor Rudolph Guiliani last spring. Approximately 1,300 students will be attending the private school of their choice this coming September. Additional experiments designed in ways similar to the one announced in New York City are needed. Although the data from the Milwaukee experiment suggest that the effects of school choice on student test scores are positive, results from a variety of school choice demonstrations are needed in order to see whether and how school choice should be implemented nationwide.

Recent Research Findings

Recent surveys indicate that school choice is popular among low-income, central city families. other studies suggest that it can contribute substantially to the education of children from low-income families. Following are results from a wide range of recent studies of school choice.

School Choice Popularity

School choice is particularly popular among the inner city poor. According to a recent nationwide survey of 4,700 respondents conducted by Stanford University, 79 percent of the inner city poor favored a school voucher plan, whereas just 59 percent of whites living in more advantaged communities favored the idea.[1] Sixty one percent of the inner city poor were "strongly", in favor; just 31 percent of the advantaged whites were "strongly" in favor. Both the inner city poor and whites living in advantaged areas agreed that school choice would be "especially helpful to low-income kids, because their public schools tend to have the most problems." Eighty-two per cent of the inner city poor and 76 percent of the advantaged whites agreed with this statement.

Findings from a 1997 national survey of minority and white Americans conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies are consistent with the Stanford study. Although the question wording is different, the Joint Center study also finds greater support for vouchers among minorities: 65 Percent of Hispanic respondents and 57 percent of African-American respondents supported the idea, as compared to 47 percent of white respondents.[2]

Student Performance

The best quality data on the effects of school choice on the performance of low-income, minority students living in central cities come from the randomized experiment conducted in Milwaukee where students were admitted to choice schools by means of a lottery. My colleagues and I found that math score differences between those attending choice schools and those remaining in public schools were slight for the first two years, but after three years of enrollment students scored 5 percentile points higher. In the fourth year, they scored 11 percentile points higher. Reading results were 2 to 3 percentile points higher for the first three years, increasing to 6 percentile points in year four.[3] These results suggest that school choice is not a magic bullet that produces instantaneous effects, but that the benefits from attendance at a private school gradually accumulate over time.[4]

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[1] The question was worded as follows: "According to reformers, the general idea behind a voucher plan is as follows. The parents of each school age child would be eligible for a grant or voucher from the state, representing a certain amount of tax money. They would have the right to send their child to a public school, just as before. Or they could use the voucher to help pay for the child's education at a private or parochial school of their choosing." Information presented by Terry Moe, Department of Political Science, Stanford University, before the Conference on Rethinking School Governance, sponsored by the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, June, 1997.

[2] David Bositis, 1997 National Opinion Poll: Children's Issues (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 1997), Table 7.

[3] Jay P. Greene, Paul E. Peterson and Jiangtao Du, "Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment," (Occasional Paper, Program in Education Policy and Governance, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1997).

[4] In a separate analysis, Cecilia Elena Rouse, "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," (Industrial Relations Section, Department of Economics, Princeton University, 1997) found positive benefits of school choice on math performance but no significant effects for reading; however, this study does not search for accumulated effects over time and relies upon data that has not been corrected for differential rates of promotion from one grade to the next. Students in the Milwaukee public school control group were more likely to be held back from one year to the next than students in choice schools; unless an appropriate adjustment for this fact is made, test scores are mis-estimated.

The studies by Witte et al. cited in footnote 11 found no effects of school choice on test scores but they undertake only a cursory analysis of data from the randomized experiment.

Results from studies of school choice programs in other cities are similar. In Cleveland, low income students attending two new ,private schools gained in the first year of the program 6 percentile points on the reading test and 15 percentile points on the math test. If these gains are maintained in future years, this will constitute a substantial achievement. The math test scores of students participating in the school choice program in San Antonio increased between 1991–92 and 1993–94, while math test scores of the control group remaining in the public schools fell. Differences between the two groups increased by 4 percentile points in math (but only 1.4 percentile points in reading).[5] In Indianapolis significant test score gains from school choice were not detected for students in early school grades but were detected for students in grades six and eight, suggesting once again that the positive effects of school choice occur only gradually over time.[6]

College Attendance

School choice programs are too recent to provide information on their effects on college attendance. But data on the effects of minority attendance at Catholic schools is available. According to a recent University of Chicago analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, conducted by the Department of Education, a survey of over 12,000 young people, students from all racial and ethnic groups are more likely to go to college if they attended a Catholic school. The effects are the greatest for urban minorities. The probability of graduating from college rises from 11 to 27 percent, if an urban minority student attends a Catholic high school. The results from this study are particularly significant, because special analytical techniques were used to take into account differences in family background characteristics.[7]

The University of Chicago study confirms results from two other studies that show positive effects for low-income and minority students of attendance at Catholic schools on high school completion and college enrollment.[8] As John Witte says in his summary of one of these studies, it "indicates a substantial private school advantage in terms of completing high school and enrolling in college, both very important events in predicting future income and well-being. Moreover . . . the effects were most pronounced for students with achievement test scores in the bottom half of the distribution."[9]

Parental Satisfaction

Several studies have found that parents participating in choice programs are more satisfied with their private than parents with students in public schools. In Indianapolis, 77 percent of those families leaving the public schools to participate in a school choice program gave their new school an "A" or a "B," as compared to only 46 percent of public-school families.[10] An evaluation of the San Antonio school choice program reports that parents who left the public school for a private school raised the grade of the school their child attended from a C plus to a B plus."[11]

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[5] Kenneth Godwin, Frank Kemerer1 Valerie Martinez, Carrie Ausbrooks and Kay Thomas, "An Evaluation of the San Antonio CEO Private Scholarship Program," (Center for the Study of Education Reform, College of Education, University of North Texas, Denton Texas, 1997), p. 9.

Inasmuch as data from all cities other than Milwaukee are not from randomized experiments, they are less definitive, underlining the need for demonstration programs that use lotteries to admit students to school choice programs.

[6] David J. Wienschrott and Sally B. Kilgore, "Educational Choice Charitable Trust: An Experiment in School Choice." (Hudson Briefing Paper, Special Report on School Choice, No. 189, 1996).

[7] Derek Neal, "The Effects of Catholic Secondary Schooling on Educational Achievement," (Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago and National Bureau for Economic Research, 1996,) See p. 26 for results for urban minorities.

[8] William N. Evans and Robert M. Schwab, "Who Benefits from Private Education? Evidence from Quantile Regressions,"(Department of Economics, University of Maryland, 1993). David Siglio and Joe Stone, "School Choice and Student Performance: Are Private Schools Really Better?" (University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty, forthcoming in 1997).

[9] John F. Witte, "School Choice and Student Performance,"in Helen F. Ladd, ed., Holding Schools Accountable: Performance-Based Reform in Education (Washington, DC.: Brookings, 1996), p. 167.

[10] Michael Heise, Kenneth D. Colburn, Jr., Joseph F. Lamberti, "A Preliminary Analysis of Education Vouchers in Indianapolis," Paper presented before the Conference on Rethinking School Governance, June 1997, Table 9.

[11] Kenneth Godwin, Frank Kemerer, Valerie Martinez, Carrie Ausbrooks and Kay Thomas, "An Evaluation of the San Antonio CEO Private Scholarship Program," (Center for the Study

Continued

In Milwaukee, seventy-five percent of the parents participating in the state-funded choice program gave their child's school a grade of either "A" or "B," 10 percentage points higher than the grades given public schools. Choice parents expressed substantially greater satisfaction than did public school parents with every aspect of their child's education: the amount their child learned, the teacher's performance, the program of instruction, the discipline in the school, the opportunities for parental involvement, the textbooks, and the location of the school. [12]

Racial Integration and Tolerance

Students attending private schools are less likely to be racially isolated. A recent study of data from the National Education Longitudinal survey conducted by the Department of Education reports that private schools were 3 percentage points less racially exclusive than the public schools in the communities in which they were located. The study also found that students attending private schools reported greater likelihood of cross-racial friendships, and both teachers and students at private schools reported fewer race-related fights and conflicts. [13]

Volunteering

The same study reports that students at private schools are more likely to think that it is important to help others and volunteer for community causes. They also were more likely to report that they, in fact, did volunteer in the past two years. Finally, private school students were more likely to say their school expected them to volunteer.

Conclusions

Recent research suggests many positive benefits from introducing a school choice program that opens access to private schools to low-income, minority students. These studies should be regarded as providing suggestive, not definitive, findings. In the field of medicine, comparable results from preliminary studies with respect to any particular treatment program would lead responsible officials to institute a series of randomized experiments to test the effectiveness of the program. The same responsible, scientific approach should be taken in the field of education. For the educational well-being of poor minority children living in central cities, Congress should set up a series of demonstration programs that can establish definitively the benefits of school choice. There is no better place to begin than in the District of Columbia, where Congress has a particular responsibility.

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of Education Reform, College of Education, University of North Texas, Denton Texas, 1997), p. 9.

[12] Information from the following reports by Witte et al., as summarized in Paul E. Peterson, "A Critique of the Witte Evaluation of Milwaukee's School Choice Program," Center for American Political Studies, Harvard University, Occasional Paper 95-2, February, 1995.

Witte, John F. 1991. "First Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (November).

Witte John F., Andrea B. Bailey and Christopher A. Thorn. 1992. "Second Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).

Witte, John F., Andrea B. Bailey and Christopher A. Thorn. 1993. "Third Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).

Witte, John F., Christopher A. Thorn, Kim M. Pritchard, and Michele Claibourn. 1994. "Fourth Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).

Witte, John F., Troy D. Sterr, and Christopher A. Thorn. 1995." Fifth Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (December).

[13] Jay P. Greene, "Democratic Values in Public and Private Schools", Paper presented at the Conference on Rethinking School Governance, Program on Education Policy and Governance, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1997. For purposes of this study, the country was divided into twelve communities consisting of the three types of communities, rural, urban, and suburban in each of the four regions of the country.

NCTR

	FY96 Actual	FY97 Approp	FY98 Request	Inc./Dec.
S&E (S000)	10,774	11,307	11,307	0
FTE	232	223	223	0
Program Level (S000)	10,774	11,307	11,307	0
FTE	232	223	223	0

Makeup of the Medical Device Industry
by Company Size
50 to 99 Employees - 16%
20 to 49 Employees - 8%
100 to 499 Employees - 10%
500 Employees or More - 2%
Fewer than 20 Employees - 64%
Source CDRH

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EXPLANATION OF PROGRAM

The National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR) conducts peer-reviewed scientific research that supports and anticipates FDA's current and future regulatory needs. This involves fundamental and applied research specifically designed to define biological mechanisms of action underlying the toxicity of products regulated by FDA. This research is aimed at understanding critical biological events in the expression of toxicity and at developing methods to improve assessment of human exposure, susceptibility and risk in the future.

In response to Agency and Department strategic goals (listed in parentheses), the NCTR has undertaken a fundamental review of its research outcomes. In doing so, the NCTR scientists in conjunction with FDA colleagues, design and develop regulatory research focusing on three strategic goals: The development of knowledge bases ("high quality scientific decision-making") or the accumulation of data that have predictive value extending beyond the individual data elements and which foster the identification of data gaps and new research areas that support regulatory decision making; the development of new strategies for the prediction of toxicity ("effective regulatory risk decisions") based on mechanistic assays; and, the conduct of method-, agent-, or concept-driven research ("pre-market review/post market assurance") or the modification and development of better analytical and toxicological test methods, and the provision of data on specific agents of interest to FDA to facilitate current and anticipated regulatory need. The effort to define performance goals and measures and establish FY 1998 outcomes dealing with scientific knowledge continues; and, it provides the basis for the development of predictive systems for assessing toxicity and the development of knowledge bases to support the FDA review process.

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

Justification of Base

NCTR expects that major activities currently underway will be continued in FY 1998. Selected examples of activities currently underway at the NCTR support research to improve risk assessment.

Senator COATS. Zakiya Courtney, thank you very much for coming this morning. We look forward to your testimony.

Ms. COURTNEY. Thank you, and thank you for inviting me.

Good morning. My name is Zakiya Courtney, and I am from Milwaukee, WI. I very humbly serve as director of Parents for School Choice, which is a grassroots organization of parents who are pursuing quality educational opportunities for their children.

I am the mother of six, the grandmother of ten, and my husband is a Milwaukee public school teacher—in fact, a very good teacher.

I am representing today the many parents who are directly benefiting from having greater educational options available to them in the form of the Milwaukee parental choice program. You just heard from the researchers and the statisticians and their views and the evidence that they have presented. But what I want to represent today is the human element, the human results of what has happened in Milwaukee, and I can speak about it from a personal level, having four grandchildren who are currently choice parents, as well as being the former administrator of the largest participating school in the choice program in Milwaukee Urban Day School.

When we first started the movement toward choice in Milwaukee, I have a grandson who at that time was in first grade, and he had the opportunity to be one of the first students involved in the nonsectarian school choice program. Well, that same grandson today is in eighth grade, getting ready to graduate. And while this debate of education reform has continued, there is a possibility—a very strong possibility, because he does have some learning disabilities—that his life could have been lost. And it has not been be-

cause he had the opportunity to participate in the nonsectarian aspect of the school choice program.

In Milwaukee, we have a situation that I like to refer to as a "been there, done that" kind of thing. Many of the solutions that other school districts across the country are talking about, in Milwaukee, we have been there, and we have done that. For example, like many other cities, Milwaukee also forced black children to be bussed out of their communities for the purposes of achieving integration with the promise of better education. It worked for some, but not for enough, and our communities are still today trying to repair the damage from this failed philosophy.

We have magnet schools—some communities call them specialty schools. These schools were designed to attract white students into the central city. Those schools have the best teachers, the best programs, the prettiest buildings, the most advanced technology, and yes, the most active parent groups. And at first in Milwaukee, when those schools were created, the neighborhood children, who were black children, were not really allowed to tend those schools, or if they were, it was in very limited numbers. Those schools today continue to exist, and they have racial quotas in terms of how many black children, how many Hispanic children, how many Native American children and how many white children can attend those schools. Those schools work for some but not for enough.

We have alternative schools, partnership schools, intra-district, inter-district transfer, innovative schools, site-based management, and much more. In Milwaukee, as I have said, we have been there and done that. The problem remains the same. These programs work for some of our kids, but not for enough of them.

The current Milwaukee parental choice program has 1,650 students enrolled in it, and the reason why the program is the size it is is not because there is a lack of interest. Parents are very interested in getting their children involved in our school choice program. The problem is that there is not enough space available in the existing nonsectarian schools to serve the number of children who want to be a part of them.

This is one reason why many of us want to expand the existing program to include religious schools. We recognize religious schools are a viable option for many of our parents. As a society, we can no longer afford to operate schools as if one size fits all. One size does not even fit most. We do not need boilerplate schools. We need to have greater options in choosing and creating schools. Schools need to have the ability to be creative enough to reach the children they are serving, and parents need to have real input into the schools.

There are a number of myths that exist around the school choice program, and one of those myths is that if you are for choice, you are against the public schools. As a society, we cannot afford to be against the public schools, because the reality is that the majority of our students are always going to be in the public school system. What we find and what we acknowledge is that choice standing alone is not a panacea. It is a catalyst for change. And if we are to be a just society, we cannot afford to be concerned only with the children we are able to rescue. We must be concerned with those

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left behind. That is why many of us who are involved with school choice see it as part of a larger educational reform umbrella.

The story of choice in Milwaukee has been kind of like the Biblical story of David and Goliath, with the choice program and the Milwaukee public schools as Goliath. Although we are small, we have been nipping at the heels of the Milwaukee public schools, and from our nipping, we have seen some change. It is our expectation that the change will bring down this cumbersome giant—not destroy the public schools, but allow us to create different types of public schools, public-private schools or private-public schools, whichever way you want to look at it.

It is our expectation that change will provide quality education in safe and nurturing environments, without regard to whether or not the school is public, private or parochial.

I want you to remember this. Parents want quality education opportunities for their children. It has nothing to do with the income level a parent wants for his or her child. We have always wanted more for our children than we have ourselves. And parents really do not care if a school is a public school, a private school, or a parochial school. They just want quality educational opportunities.

Thank you.

Senator COATS. Thank you very much, Zakiya.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Courtney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ZAKIYA COURTNEY

Good morning. My name is Zakiya Courtney and I am from Milwaukee, WI. I very humbly serve as the Director of Parents For School Choice, a grassroots group of parents who are pursuing quality education opportunities for their children. I am representing today, many parents who are directly benefiting from having greater educational options available to them, in the form of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP).

The MPCP allows children from low income families to attend private non-sectarian schools in Milwaukee with the same dollars the State sends to Milwaukee Public Schools. I am addressing you today, in support of a program I have observed as the former administrator of the largest participating school, Urban Day School, and as a responsible and involved grandparent of four Choice students.

In Milwaukee we have a "Been There, Done That", situation. Many of the solutions other school districts are looking at, we in Milwaukee have been there and done that. For example, Milwaukee like many other cities forced Black children to be bussed out of their communities for the purposes of achieving integration with the promise of better education. It worked for some, but not for enough and our communities are still trying to repair the damage resulting from this failed philosophy.

We have magnet or specialty schools. These schools were designed to attract white students into the central city. They have the best teachers, the best programs, the prettiest buildings, the most advanced technology and the most active parent groups. At first, neighborhood children (black children) were allowed to attend in very limited numbers. They continue to have set racial quotas and huge waiting lists. They too worked for some but not far enough.

We've had alternative schools, partnership schools, intra district, interdistrict transfers, innovative schools site-based management and much more. In Milwaukee, we have definitively been there and done that.

The problem is these programs for some of our children but did not work far enough of our children.

Our choice program allows parents to choose private non-sectarian schools for their children without paying the cost of tuition. In return parents get to choose the best educational environment for the children.

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program currently has 1,650 students. The number is small because there is not enough space available in the non-sectarian schools to serve the number of children who want to attend the private schools. The waiting

list is tremendous. This one of the reasons many of us want to expand the program to include religious schools.

I like to use the analogy of taking a lot of people with different eating habits out to dinner. Do you take them to a steak house? Well you just left out the vegetarians. Do you take them to a seafood restaurant? No, someone is allergic to fish. You would probably look for a smorgasbord. Someplace with an elaborate buffet, where everyone could find something to appeal to their needs. A school choice program adds to the buffet table of educational options available to our children in Milwaukee.

As a society we can no longer afford to operate schools as if one size fits all; one size doesn't even fit most. We don't need boilerplate schools, we need to have greater options in choosing and creating schools. Schools need the ability to be creative enough to reach the children they are serving. Parents need to have real input into the schools.

In conclusion, Choice standing alone is not a panacea. It is a catalyst for change. As a just society; we cannot afford to only be concerned with the children we are able to rescue. We must be concerned with the ones left behind. The story of the Choice program in Milwaukee, has been like the biblical story of David and Goliath. With the Choice program as David and the Milwaukee Public Schools as Goliath. Although we are small, we have been nipping at the heels of MPS. And from our nipping we have seen some change. It is our expectation that change will bring down this cumbersome giant and allow all of Milwaukee's children to receive quality education in safe and nurturing environments, without regards to whether or not the school is public, private or parochial.

Please remember, parents want quality education opportunities for their children in safe and nurturing environments. And they don't care if it is a public school, private school or parochial school.

Thank you.

Senator COATS. Finally, our last witness, Dolores Fridge, from Minnesota, we thank you, Dolores, for being here.

Ms. FRIDGE. Thank you, Senator Coats, for extending the invitation to me to speak.

I am honored to testify before you today. My name is Dolores Fridge, and I am currently the human rights commissioner for the State of Minnesota. I am also a mother—although I have often tried to resign the position, it stays with me. I am a former school teacher of 14 years in the City of Minneapolis, and I have held a variety of positions in the public and private sectors; and like Ms. Courtney, although not as many, I am also a grandmother of a 21-month-old child.

I am here to talk about human beings. I am here to talk about children. I am here to talk about a society that should be ashamed of itself for not providing any and all means necessary to educate every child from K through 12.

First, I want to tell you a story of two little girls. There was a child who was very mature, very reserved, and extremely tall for her age. She was 4 in September, would have been 5 in November, and the parents discussed whether or not to put her in school early. Well, in Minneapolis back in those days, when you put a child in school early, you had to take them down to the board of education and have them tested by the school psychologist.

Fine. The child was taken down and tested. The psychologist said, "I totally agree. This child is going to be a misfit at this size and as bright as she is, if she does not get in school soon." School started, and the child was enrolled at the neighborhood school.

Two or 3 months into the school year, the mother got a phone call saying we want you to come and have a meeting about your child. The mother was elated. This was her first child, oldest child, bright child, in school early. This has got to be the conference of

the century. She expected to go in and hear rave reviews about her child's accomplishments because after all, she had educated her to this point with the help of the father and knew how good this kid really was.

Well, if you are a parent, and you have ever had a problem with your child in a public school setting, you know that if you walk into the school and there are more than two adults present, you know your child is in trouble. The mother walked into the room, and there were three adults. She began to think, My goodness, is this kid this great 3 months into kindergarten?

Well, needless to say, the mother was a tad shocked when, a few minutes later, in sort of a roundabout way, as school people tend to do, the classroom teacher finally expressed the need to have the others there—a social worker, an EMR tester—to get permission to test this child as emotionally mentally retarded.

The parent, after swallowing very hard and asking why, was told by the kindergarten teacher that she did not want to play in the doll corner, and she really did not get along well with the other kids in the room.

Counting to ten, the parent finally asked, Are you aware that this child is only 4? All three faces were astonished. No. That is kind of frightening, since your date of birth does go on your school record in kindergarten.

The parent asks, Are you aware that this child was tested by the City of Minneapolis psychologist and deemed not only well capable emotionally, but definitely in learning skills to be in a kindergarten class? All three very embarrassed faces said no.

The parent at that point sucked it up because she too worked for the Minneapolis public school system. She left the classroom, went to the principal and said, I want my child out of there.

For the rest of that year, the child was in a different kindergarten setting. The parent knew that this was not going to work for her child, so she called her dad who, by the way, was also a school teacher in the Cleveland public schools at the time when they were teaching kids, and asked for some money to put the child into a private school.

Well, although the parents were Methodist, there were no private Methodist schools in Minneapolis at the time, so the Lutheran school that was close at hand and would bus the child and was affordable—only a few hundred dollars a year—is where the child went. She went there until she was in sixth grade. At sixth grade, she came out, went to junior high school, was tested, was accelerated, missed ninth grade because of the acceleration, went to tenth grade, got out at 17, and graduated from the University of Minnesota. She is now 29 years old, and she is helping Nordstrom open a new store in Long Island.

Seven years later, another child from the same family. Now the family has moved into the upper middle-class section of Minneapolis, MN. This kid is young. She is the baby. We grant that. She is a little immature. She went to kindergarten and had a pretty good year.

She went to first grade, and the mother and dad are finally thinking, We can finally get one of our kids educated in the public

school where, by the way, the mother has now worked for we do not want to discuss how many years, but a very long time.

At the first conference and open house, we have heard now for weeks about this huge self-portrait. Every child has one, and they are going to be displayed all around the room. [Pause.] You get to the conference, and your child's picture is not there. [Pause.] She looks devastated, and she is. The teacher says it is not there because it did not meet standards. [Pause.] I will get this together.

If you have not figured it out by now, these were my kids. The child cries in the front of a classroom of all white students and teachers and parents because she is the only black child in the class.

I was the mother, the Minneapolis public school teacher, loving and taking care of other people's kids for 14 years. I remember sucking it up and now doing what I am doing now because she was already embarrassed and hurt, and I did not want to add to that pain.

The next day, I went to the principal and had her moved to another class—once again, the same school system, and this was 25 years ago—not now, not last year. This was when we were one of the top ten city school systems in this country. This was with an educated mother and father who happened to be African American and a second generation education, because my parents are both educators.

And I say to you today that if this can happen to me and my husband and my two well-raised little girls, what you are seeing happening in statistics is real. And I do not care about the research and the data and the Ph.D.s who want to debate this issue. And I am so proud of this young lady with her four little girls, who has fought the system, because we left it. We packed up that year and moved to Edina, and guess what? All of a sudden, this kid was teachable. She could learn like everybody else could, and she is now working in a bank as a teller.

So we need to stop the debate. We need to not be partisan. We need a way to get away from the statistics. We are talking about human beings in America. We are talking about our children, whom we say all the time that we love and we care about. We do not say that we love and care about children that look like Senator Coats. We do not say that we love and we care about children who look like Dr. Fuller, with his Ph.D., who may be able to afford an expensive school, or the honorable Dolores Fridge, now commissioner of human rights. We say that we love our children.

This is a democracy, and yet we segregate intentionally and unintentionally, and we allow ill-prepared teachers and ill-prepared administrators to hold us hostage, and we allow teachers' unions and other support groups to tell us that we have got to leave our kids in these places until they figure out how to fix the problem. As Dr. Fuller said earlier, if we know what this is about, why haven't we fixed it—because you see, whatever happens to one child in this country happens to all of us.

In the State of Minnesota, we spend $45,000 per year for every child in juvenile detention, and we will not give $11,000 or $12,000 in any type of program possible to have children learn to read and write in an environment that is good for them.

Well, not only was I the only one, and I saw the light—and I will get through this quickly—who felt this way, but we have a wonderful Governor who feels this way about education. And this is what he and I and a bunch of other folks did this year after he vetoed the largest education bill in the State's history, not because of that, because most of the stuff in there he supported from the beginning, but because he wanted to take a simple $150 million and give it to the parents in the State of Minnesota for them to be able to help in providing support. My dad paid for mine. As a school teacher, I could not do it.

So I am for this, and I am for the money that comes from anywhere as long as it is legal and goes anywhere. I pay taxes, and my kids are 23 and 29 years old, so I do not care where it goes, as long as some child gets educated.

In our bill this year, we have a dependent education expense deduction, increasing the maximum deduction to $2,500 for each dependent in grades 7 through 12, private, parochial or public school; $1,625 for each dependent in grades K through 6. The current law deduction is $1,000, 7 through 12, and $650. We got 2-1/2 times that amount.

That money can be used for academic summer school, summer camp, tutoring, personal computer hardware and educational software to the current list of qualifying expenses. This consists of tuition, fees, nonreligious textbooks and instructional materials and transportation. And by the way, our first expense deduction was passed in 1971 and sponsored by the Democratic Party in our State.

The Minnesota working family credit is increased from 15 to 25 percent of the Federal income credit for families with qualifying children. Under current law, the maximum credit for a family with two or more children is $548. This would increase to $914 under this section. The credit for a family with one child would increase from $332 to $553. It can be used as well for anything you want.

The Minnesota education credit allows a credit for educational expenses and defines educational expenses to include tutoring, academic summer school and camps, nonreligious textbooks, instructional materials, personal computers, educational software, transportation expenses paid to others. Educational expenses do not include tuition or fees for private schools. Although we asked for it, that is the piece we lost in order to gain the rest. And the threshold for the families—make no mistake about it; it is not people like you and me—it is for families with children who have less than $3,500 a year in income. And in Minnesota, let me tell you, that is not much money.

We have a severability clause that was put in to sever any poor vision a court enjoins or finds unconstitutional.

The effective date for these changes is 1998. We have already had a response to the need for change in the past 10 years by having charter schools. We have increased the number available as well as our alternative schools, and we have also passed a $90 million technology bill which will make the State of Minnesota the State with the lowest ratio of students to computers in the classroom in the United States.

I will be glad to answer any questions about this later, but I just want us all to keep in mind that this is about our children. This is about yours and mine, and if you do not have any, you were one once, and somebody loved you and got you to this point. All I am saying to you is let us not get bogged down in partisan politics, let us not get bogged down in fears about whom or what is going to take something over.

I agree totally with Dr. Fuller: Let it evolve, but do not let children die anymore in the process. Let it evolve and work out to what it is going to be, and let us work at getting it done, and let us provide quality education for everyone's children—or else, let us tell people straight up front that we are not going to do that, so they know what they need to do to have other options.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fridge follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DOLORES FRIDGE

Mr. Chairman and members, I am honored to testify before you today. My name is Dolores Fridge, Human Rights Commissioner for the state of Minnesota. I am a mother, former school teacher and have held a variety of positions in the public and private sectors. I am here to talk to you about education reform and choice for all children in Minnesota. Before I begin, I would like to share a personal story with you.

This is the story of two little girls. The first little girl was reserved and tall for her age—a good girl. The state psychologist pretested her to determine her leaning ability. The psychologist agreed with the parent's decision to send her to school early, even though she was four years old. By the way, this little girl is scan American, which shouldn't matter, but I need to tell you that.

So, about two or three months into the school year the kindergarten teacher calls the parent and says she wants to see her. The mother goes to the school thinking that she is about to hear rave reviews about her daughter's performance because afterall, this little girl is really bright. When the mother arrives, there are several people sitting in the room. Now, when you are a parent, you know that when more than one person is in the room besides your child, you know that the child is in trouble. They proceed to suggest EMR testing for the child. The parent is thinking, what planet am I on? EMR? Emotionally Mentally Retarded? What's the problem?

The teacher starts a placating discussion about the child's not knowing this and that, she doesn't get along with other children, won't play in the doll corner, dit, a, dit, a, dit, a dit, a, dit. Um huh. The parent asks the group whether they have pulled the child's file? File? They don't have files in kindergarten. The parent says that the child has a file with the school district. Did they realize that the child was four? No, they hadn't even paid attention to her birth date.

The file was pulled and the parent went to the principal, demanding that the child be moved. The parent went to her own father, a school teacher incidentally, and said she wanted to put the child in private school. She said she couldn't fight the battle. The granddad paid for the child to go to private school. The child eventually went back to public school in sixth grade, accelerated, skipped ninth grade and went to the University of Minnesota, where she graduated early. Never had a problem.

Same family, seven years later. Another little girl, different part of town, upscale, big time, everybody is supposed to be fair now right?. The child is the youngest in her family, a little immature, but starts kindergarten anyway. First grade, first conference, the parents attend the open house. Everybody's child in the class has a picture on the wall. The kids have been taught for weeks about drawing a self portrait to display. The parents look for their daughter's picture, but it's easy to see that is isn't there. The child looks too, she is devastated. The teacher comes over and the parents ask where their daughter's picture is? There are forty or fifty parents in the classroom all pointing and admiring the pictures. The teacher says that the picture didn't meet their standards so it wasn't posted with all the others. The child looks up with tears streaming down her face. The mother is livid but maintains her composure. She counts to ten figuring that no one needed to end up in the Hennepin County Workhouse serving time.

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The next day she returns and sees the principal. She tells the principal that she wants her daughter moved out of the school. The parents enroll their daughter in the Edina school district, an affluent suburb. And guess what? She could write, read and even think. And although her drawing wasn't great, she had a whole lot of other skills that were. The school took the time to find out that she was bright and had skills. You see the Edina schools have to compete with the most elite private schools in the Twin Cities—Blake, Breck and the rest. They don't have victims in their school system who have no where else to go. Those families have choices.

And you know what's funny? Those were my two girls. Mine. Educated children of a second generation school teacher. My kids. I am going to fight for opportunity and choices for all children, because what happened to me shouldn't happen to anybody's kids.

Now I would like to briefly outline the broader education challenge in Minnesota and what Governor Carlson has done to address it.

First, it is important to put the education debate in Minnesota into context. For years the test scores of Minnesota's college bound students ranked among the best nationally. Our SAT and ACT scores were proudly released and offered as evidence that our educational system was, as Garrison Keillor would say, "above average."

Well, what we've discovered is that our educational system has done, and continues to do, a good job for the majority of college bound students. But when we looked at the rest of the students in the system, and the number of students who were dropping out of the system, we saw a very different picture than the idyllic Lake Wobegon image we had clung to for years.

At the same time we have increased education spending by 23 percent per pupil statewide and 45 percent per pupil in Minneapolis, basic skills test scores have declined. About 1/3 of the students statewide who took our state basic skills tests in math and reading failed. In Minneapolis about 2/3 of the students failed. During this same period of increased spending, the dropout rate rose to between 50 and 60 percent for students of color in Minneapolis, and our statewide dropout rate rose from 12 percent in 1984 to 19 percent in 1996. We are losing one out of every five kids in our state. And we are losing them earlier, beginning in ninth grade.

We all pay the price for the failure of our educational system to reach these kids. Juvenile arrests are up a staggering 56 percent since 1991. Juvenile violent crime has risen 126 percent since 1985. And we are spending $45,000 per year to house one juvenile in a state detention facility.

Obviously, simply putting more money into the same educational system hasn't worked, and there is no reason to believe it will work in the future. The system hasn't responded to our kids' needs. We must do things differently so that everyone is held accountable and all of our children have a chance to succeed.

That's why Governor Carlson fought for, and won, significant reforms in the public school system.

We passed a statewide testing program which will enable all Minnesota parents to know how their children and their schools are performing in core subjects.

We expanded charter school options. By significantly cutting regulation of and increasing funding for charter schools, more schools will be formed. In addition to the local and state boards of education, our public and private colleges and universities can now sponsor charter schools.

We're also linking higher education and the K–12 system with lab schools to test and develop the very best educational practices.

We are driving more decisions and funding to the school building through site based management. Parents and community members will have a greater say in deciding how each school spends resources on the education of their children.

The state is also making a $90 million investment in technology. This program puts Minnesota on track to have the lowest computer to student ratio in the nation.

But the final piece is the most important because it offers choice for all parents and children.

Through a system of tax credits and deductions every family will have additional resources to pay for education expenses. Text books and instructional materials. Home computers and education software. Transportation. Summer school and academic camps. Tutoring. And private school tuition.

We believe this fundamentally changes the way we approach education. Every family, whether their children attend private or public schools are included in this plan. It gives parents, rather than the adults who run the system, the power and the money to make choices to improve their children's performance in school. And it introduces competition, a fundamental part of what makes our country great, into the public education system.

As a former public school teacher I am not ready to give up on public schools. I would not have joined the state board of education in Minnesota recently if I was

ready to give up the fight. But I know we're failing too many kids today and that we need to shake up the public school system so that is works for all young people.

Credits and deductions for education expenses does just that. It draws parents directly into the education of their children by giving them meaningful options and the resources to choose what is best.

This debate is not about private versus public education. It's about kids. Kids who are currently failing. Kids who end up on the ash heap. We cannot allow another generation to pass through a system that does not change, does not work and does not want competition. We owe it to ourselves and especially to our kids to act now.

Thank you for letting me speak before you today. I am happy to respond to any questions you might have.

NEW MINNESOTA EDUCATION LAW

JUNE 30, 1997

On June 30, 1997, Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson signed legislation to substantially increase the accountability of the public education system in Minnesota through uniform testing, expanded choices and by empowering parents and schools to play a bigger role in directing education.

New laws were enacted to give parents resources to purchase additional educational help for their students such as tutoring and academic enrichment camps. Funding for disadvantaged students was increased and will now follow students most in need to their specific schools rather than be expended on other district priorities. Dramatic new investments in technology and charter schools will provide students with expanded access and opportunity. These provisions, and more, were part of the Governor's original education proposals in December of 1996 and together represent the most comprehensive reform package passed in the country.

Highlights

• *Establishes statewide testing ($5 million) Enables all Minnesota parents to know how their children and their schools are performing in core subjects.*

—Students in grades three, five eight and high school will take standardized statewide tests. Nearly all students will be included in the testing.

—Results will be reported to parents statewide and by district and school. Demographics of students will be included in these reports, as well as school spending information.

• *Expands the current tax deduction for educational expenses by 2.5 times. All tax filers will now be eligible for education deductions of up to $1,625 for students in grades K–6 and $2,500 for students in grades 7–12.*

Deductible items now include:

—private school tuition

—text books and instructional materials

—home computer software and hardware

—transportation expenses

—education summer school and camps

—tutoring

• *Creates refundable education tax credit for families with incomes below $33,500.*

—tax credit of $1,000 per child with a $2,000 limit per family

—All items listed above quality except tuition at non-public schools

• *Expands Minnesota's working family tax credit providing an average increase of $200 to $350 for families with incomes of $29,000. and below. Credit can be used for any purpose including private school tuition.)*

—Credit will be increased from 15 percent of the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit, to 25 percent of the EITC.

• *Increases spending on public education by 15 percent (nearly $1 billion over the next two years)*

—Adds three days to the school year.

—Brings the basic education formula per student from $3,505 to $3,660.

—Increases compensatory revenue for low-income students by $100 million, with new provisions to drive this money to where the students attend school.

• *Drives funding and decision-making to schools over districts and empowers schools and parents to decide how resources are used at individual schools.*

—Allows specific funding for lower-achieving students to follow students to their individual schools (includes Title I, compensatory revenue, Limited English revenue.)

—Establishes the creation of school site councils which take greater responsibility for setting priorities and determining how resources are spent.

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—Allows schools to enter into performance agreements with their school boards outlining goals ad achievement expectations upon which schools will be judged.

—Allows for teachers to be rewarded for their performance.

• *Charter schools ($4 million) Strengthens the opportunities for charter schools to succeed and provide unique learning opportunities for more students.*

—Includes funding for building lease aid and allows charter schools to accept funding from other sources.

—Lifts the maximum number of charter schools allowed by law.

—Provides a revolving loan fund for charter school start-ups.

—Allows public and private higher education institutions to sponsor charter schools.

—Allows conversion of a public school to a charter with a vote by a majority of teachers.

• *Lab schools ($2.5 million) Establishes a lab school grant program linking K–12 and higher education, and enables new lab schools to test the very best educational practices.*

• *Technology ($90 million) Puts Minnesota on track to become lead state in educational technology offering lowest computer to student ratio in the nation.*

—Technology grants for computer hardware, software and connectivity.

—Creates a technology donation and refurbishing programs for schools.

—Establishes a technology academy for teachers.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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THURSDAY, JULY 3, 1997

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

School Lessons

Education reformers of the world take heart: Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson, a moderate Republican, has just taken on the teachers unions and won. Last week, he arm-wrestled his Democratic legislature into giving every family in the state either a tax deduction or a tax credit that can be used for expenses at any public, private or parochial school of their choice. Both the new law and the way he made it happen could become a model for the rest of the country.

A major supporter of public schools, Governor Carlson became frustrated when the legislature wouldn't lift a cap on the number of deregulated charter schools. More than half the high school students in Minneapolis don't graduate. He proposed a scholarship program for low-income students, but it was shot down by the legislature last year. This year he proposed to expand a modest tax deduction that Minnesota residents have been able to take for 20 years to defray expenses at either private or public schools. He then stunned legislators by announcing he wouldn't sign any bill that didn't expand school choice to all Minnesota parents.

Arne Carlson

Democratic legislators didn't believe he was serious. They passed a $6.7 billion public education bill in May and ignored the governor's plan. He promptly vetoed it and began a month-long stalemate. Teachers unions flooded legislators with calls and faxes opposing any tax credits. Black and Hispanic community leaders responded by endorsing the plan, which garnered 68% to 80% support in polls. Mr. Carlson noted with irony that several legislators sent their own children to private school while they blocked a chance for low-income parents to exercise the same option.

In the end, his stubbornness largely paid off (Beltway Republicans take note). Legislators agreed to allow an unlimited number of charter schools and also increase the annual tax deduction to $2,526 from $1,000 per junior and senior high school student. Parents of grade schoolers will be allowed a $1,625 deduction. A new refundable educational tax credit of $1,000 per child was created for families earning under $33,500 a year. In a big deal to appease the unions, the credit can be used only for expenses outside of tuition such as supplies, transportation and tutoring. Schools are already trimming down their tuition charges so parents can take advantage of the credit.

Teachers unions denounced the bill and claimed it "added nothing for public education." Governor Carlson responded that what the public wants is public education that serves students, not bureaucrats. "A governor went toe-to-toe with the teachers unions and choice prevailed. It can be done," he told us.

Indeed, if choice can come to progressive Minnesota it is politically viable anywhere. Gordon St. Angelo of the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice notes that Governor Carlson faced a largely unfriendly news media, hostile education committees and a legislature out of his party. What he had in abundance was a real commitment to change and the desire to convince voters he was right. In the end the teachers unions were left to grouse, as legislators passed the bill by 50 to 0 in the Senate and 108 to 21 in the House.

Governor Carlson has uncovered one of the hidden secrets of American politics: The political clout of the teachers unions is more perception than reality. "They claim to be able to defeat choice supporters at elections, but they never do," says Jeanne Allen of the Center for Education Reform.

Indeed, a new report prepared at the direction of the 2.3 million member National Education Association candidly admits the union's weaknesses. Written by the Kamber Group, a Washington-based consulting firm, the analysis warns that the union's "very existence" is in doubt, and that almost bold moves it risks "further marginalization and possibly even organizational death." It concludes by urging the NEA to embrace educational reforms that are "tangible and measurable" and downplay its emphasis on politics.

This week, the NEA is holding its annual convention in Atlanta. Its president, Bob Chase, has said it must "reinvent" itself by, for example, applauding the removal of incompetent teachers. Such moves are to be applauded, but reformers should also look at what lessons the NEA absorbs from its political defeat in Minnesota. Let's hope a more nuanced and less confrontational attitude toward such "tangible and measurable" reforms as choice and charter schools are among them.

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REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Choice Showdown

One of the last liberal windmills is the belief that if public school spending is somehow equalized among "poor" and "wealthy" districts, the educational accomplishments of the former will automatically rise. The Supreme Court of New Jersey is the latest to issue this decree yet again. Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson thinks there has to be a better way. A GOP moderate, he says the argument shouldn't be about how much money supports systems, but whether individual students get a good education. For suggesting such a distinction exists, he's now in a showdown with a Democratic legislature over his plan to allow parents tax credits and deductions for use as private-school tuition or in public-school tutoring and summer school programs.

Arne H. Carlson

Minnesota's has long been out front on school reform. In 1991 it opened the country's first charter schools. For 20 years it has let parents take a modest tax deduction for private or public school expenses, a deduction found Constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1983 because it went to parents, not the school itself.

Now Governor Carlson says the slipping quality of education in Minnesota compels a sweeping reform package, called Students First. Its centerpiece is a tripling of the tax deduction, so parents could take up to $3,000 a year off their taxes to pay tuition. Parents earning below $39,000 a year would receive a tax credit of up to $1,[illegible] per child. The tax changes would be married to a statewide testing program that would require every school to publish its results.

So far the legislature has balked. Teachers unions and school boards have bombarded legislators with faxes and phone calls opposing the plan. "I've worked here 22 years and it's the most concentrated effort on behalf of public schools and students I've seen," says Bob Meeks of the Minnesota School Boards Association.

The governor has responded by pledging not to sign an education funding bill unless Students First is included. He notes that philosophical objections to choice don't hold water. Minnesota already pays day care subsidies to 29,000 pre-kindergarten students and spends $48 million a year for students in private universities. Many special education students can attend private schools at public expense. "We have choice throughout our system, but only in places where the unions think it's all right," he told us. "They're petrified that competition might prompt everyone to do a better job."

Governor Carlson says his own views on choice evolved gradually. He believes in public education, having grown up attending PS 36 in the Bronx. But he believes education must serve the *public* and no longer is serving it when more than half the high school students in Minneapolis don't graduate. "When I was in the legislature I saw education in the context of local schools in my district," he told us. "They were OK, so education was OK. But now that I'm governor, I can't bear to see districts where kids are sent home from school at 1:45 p.m. and their future thrown on an ash heap."

Critics say he should bend on choice and pursue other reforms. But the governor notes that the unions have already capped the number of charter schools and burdened them with requirements. "We need complete choice in education, because only with the competition that it brings will we get the public schools we need," he says. The governor, well-known for his stubbornness, is confident of winning his showdown with the legislature, and indeed none of his vetoes has ever been overridden. School reformers would do well to focus their attention north to see how it all plays out.

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Minnesota Smart

Minnesota has a reputation for efficient government services. But its public schools haven't lived up to that standard lately. Spending on public education has gone up 57% in the past six years, but the results have been disappointing. In Minneapolis and St. Paul more than 50% of students drop out of school between the 9th and 12th grades. Statewide, a third of 8th-graders fail the basic reading test and a quarter fail the math test.

These problems have prompted Governor Arne Carlson, a Republican with impeccable moderate credentials, to embrace a sweeping program of reform called Students First. It builds on Minnesota's pioneering introduction of charter schools in 1991 by providing all parents with real educational choice. For 20 years the state has allowed parents to take a modest tax deduction for educational expenses in private or public schools. In 1983, this deduction was found Constitutional by the Supreme Court in a landmark victory for school choice. Since the deduction's constitutionality has been settled, Governor Carlson now wants to triple it and allow parents to take up to $3,000 off their taxes. The money could be used not just for private school tuition, but for such things as public-school tutoring and summer school classes. Parents earning less than $29,000 a year would for the first time receive an educational credit from the state of up to $1,000 per child. Home schoolers would be eligible for a credit of up to $1,000.

Students First would also introduce a state-wide testing program that will require every school to publish the results so that parents can compare the performance of their school to others. It would also allow people to set up tax-free accounts for education after high school and would dramatically expand charter schools.

Naturally, Governor Carlson's plan has met with skepticism from the educational establishment. The head of St. Paul's school board complained about increasing the number of charter schools, saying that because they don't have to follow the myriad rules that tie down public schools they "have all the advantages and none of the restrictions." Governor Carlson agrees and says he wants to free up schools so that they are "centered around the student, and not the provider."

Students First has received some support from Democrats and the media. Former Minneapolis Mayor Al Hofstede and former legislator John Sandl, both Democrats, serve on the board of Minnesotans for School Choice, a group of prominent citizens who want to expand educational opportunities. The St. Paul Pioneer Press, the state's second-largest newspaper, has editorialized that Governor Carlson's plan "has appeal because it would be open to all families with children—rather than the relatively few low-income families that would have been eligible for Carlson's earlier private-school voucher plan."

Governor Carlson's plan still faces tough sledding in the Democratic legislature. However, he has said he will veto any budget that doesn't include "substantial" educational reform, and his stance is taken seriously. Governor Carlson has vetoed more than 100 bills—more than any other Minnesota governor—and has never been overridden.

The National Governors Association will meet in Washington this weekend. No doubt education will be on the agenda, and the governors would do well to look at Minnesota's model legislation. Ultimately, educational choice can transform education only if its benefits are made available to all parents. Governor Carlson's plan is one of the first in the nation to try to turn that principle into political reality.

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Senator COATS. Thank you, Dolores. I appreciate your testimony. I know it was not easy, and we thank you for it.

Mr. Molnar, in response to Dr. Fuller, you asked why does it have to be vouchers, and then you went on to give reasons why the voucher proposal was not the way to go. But Dr. Fuller, number one, said that it does not just have to be vouchers. He said that should be one of the choices, and he said we have tried a number of other initiatives without really bringing about the kinds of improvements that we would like to see.

Ms. Courtney said, "Been there, done that"—hey, you name it, we have done it. Why not? Glenn Lewis tried to institute a pilot program. It sounds to me like—and we did not get into all the details—but we have put in all the safeguards that address the objections about skimming and about disadvantaged students and making sure it is done on a random basis and so on. Why not? Why not a pilot program? Why not give it a try? Why not give parents some power instead of just taxpayers in general, who are represented by all of us here? Why not inject some competition—and if not vouchers, what?

Mr. MOLNAR. Sure. I think that that is a fair question, Senator Coats, and one that has got to be asked.

I think there are two ways of responding. One is sort of as a public policy issue in general, and the other is with regard to specific information about Milwaukee. If I thought for a second that a bill such as S. 1 was going to directly improve the quality of education that poor children receive, I would be testifying in favor of it. I do not think it will.

Let me tell you about Milwaukee. As I said, Milwaukee was started as a voucher experiment, and that means that you systematically gather information. When the program was expanded—and Ms. Courtney was very active in lobbying for the expansion of the program and a number of others who were frequently called upon to testify and who are very publicly known—one of the things that was eliminated from the expansion in 1995 when the program was—the numerical number of students that could participate and the addition of religious schools was added—the evaluation component was removed.

Now, we have heard the criticisms, and I am sure you have, Senator Coats, of Professor Witte's evaluation from Professor Peterson and from others. But it would seem to me that if one of the things that the folks at least in Wisconsin who supported vouchers wanted to do was to set aside what they regarded as a flawed evaluation conducted by John Witte, who many attack as being somehow biased on the matter of vouchers, this was a wonderful opportunity to put in place a very rigorous controlled design and study it. But instead, voucher supporters in Wisconsin chose to destroy the evaluation component altogether, and instead of having the ability to gather data about the performance of children in Milwaukee's voucher schools, they replaced it with a report from the legislative audit bureau in the year 2001, without any legislative language that would allow for the gathering of data.

Now, with regard to the actual experience in the Milwaukee voucher program, it is important to keep in mind two things. One

is that this program is extraordinarily small. About 23 percent of the children in the program are kindergarten-age children. And I should tell you that that is an important fact because it does not represent nor can it be implied to represent a rejection of the Milwaukee public schools. Milwaukee public schools do not have the budget to provide full-day kindergarten for every child who wants to get into the Milwaukee public schools. So that is one thing.

The second thing is that the attrition rate in the program, as I alluded to in my opening comments, is enormous; it is just enormous. So that it got to the point where——

Senator COATS. What is "enormous"?

Mr. MOLNAR. Over the period of time, the number of students that you are able to study—in Professor Greene's study, for example, you see a steady decline in the number of students who were available for the purposes of his study. He studied——

Senator COATS. Well, you said the attrition rate is "enormous." You are talking about the number who entered the program versus the number who dropped out; right?

Mr. MOLNAR. Exactly—who leave, who go somewhere else, who are not available.

Senator COATS. And what is that percentage?

Mr. MOLNAR. Over a 5-year period, it is about 80 to 85 percent.

Senator COATS. So that 80 to 85 percent of the people who started the program did not finish it; is that what you are saying?

Mr. MOLNAR. Well, when you say the "program," the other confusion, Senator Coats, is that most people think about "program" in terms of the way they think about a public school program as a K-12 program. In fact, the overwhelming number of students who attend the Milwaukee voucher experimental schools are elementary-age children. In fact, most of those are lower primary-age children. And that is one of the reasons for the confusion with regard to the cost advantage.

Senator COATS. Well, okay. We are getting off the question I am trying to get at here. We do these studies, and you say the sample was too small, so you could discontinue the program, or you could increase the size. If the problem with the study is that the sample is too small, one could argue that we need a larger sample in order to get a relevant study.

Mr. MOLNAR. Well, what I was saying is that the available——

Senator COATS. And if the sample is too small, why are your results correct, and everybody else—Dr. Peterson is wrong?

Mr. MOLNAR. No. The available students to be studied was so small. Dr. Peterson tried to capture every possible available student——

Senator COATS. OK, but——

Mr. MOLNAR [continuing]. And if you take a look at the number of schools that are participating, what Dr. Peterson really looked at were three schools.

Senator COATS. So we need a larger sample.

Mr. MOLNAR. No, it is not that. The problem——

Senator COATS. What do we need?

Mr. Molnar [continuing.] The problem that you have is not that of sample size. The problem that you have is the problem of student attrition. One of the criticisms——

Senator COATS. Oh, so the "too small" is not a factor. So the problem is attrition, right?

Mr. MOLNAR. It affects the way in which the data can be reported——

Senator COATS. Right. Let us set the data aside.

Mr. Molnar [continuing.] But the policy problem, the policy problem as opposed to the research problem, is the issue of attrition. One of the criticisms of the Milwaukee public schools has to do with the mobility of low-income children, and one of the premises of the Milwaukee voucher experiment is that you have large numbers of poor parents clamoring to get into voucher schools so their children can get a better education.

Both of those premises are very arguable at best—that is to put the best light on it. If you track down the way in which parents actually behave with regard to the Milwaukee voucher schools, what I come up with is a voucher question, a research question, Senator Coats, that no one has addressed and that every researcher agrees upon, whether it is Paul Peterson, Alex Molnar, or John Witte, and that is the parents who send their children to the Milwaukee voucher schools have some characteristics in common. The mothers tend to be more highly educated. The parents tend to have higher expectations for their children, and the parents tend to be more highly involved in the activities of the school. All three of these things in the research literature are strongly associated with academic success.

So that if you ask me as a researcher: I have one group of parents who are sending their children to school who have these characteristics, and I have another group where the mothers are less well-educated, where the parents do not have high expectations and where the parents are not strongly involved in the schools, and you asked which group of children is going to achieve at a higher rate, I would say that is a no-brainer. It is going to be this group.

Senator COATS. OK, Mr. Molnar——

Mr. MOLNAR. In Milwaukee, what I am saying is that that is not the case.

Senator COATS. OK.

Mr. MOLNAR. And that is the research point that is unexplored, is——

Senator COATS. I understand that.

Mr. MOLNAR [continuing]. What are the voucher schools doing to get in the way of what you would expect would be superior academic achievements.

Senator COATS. I understand that. OK. Mr. Molnar, do you ever think that sometimes you just get lost in the numbers, lost in the research methodology? I mean, what do you say to Pam Ballard? What do you say to Dolores Fridge?

Have we just gathered the 10 or 15 percent who have successfully done this? What do you say to the parents who come here and talk about the unbelievable differences, and why shouldn't I as a parent decide rather than let a researcher decide, rather than let an entrenched, monopolistic system decide?

If we had not deregulated telephone service, AT&T would be up here, saying research shows that consumers will not benefit from this—I mean, they would have concocted every argument known to

man in order to protect their monopoly. They would not have been here, saying, let us do it. They would have fought every trial, every pilot, everything else, because they were afraid that, gee, maybe people would choose that.

Shouldn't we leave that choice to the parents?

Mr. MOLNAR. Senator Coats, first of all, emotionally, I have got to tell you that I find your line of reasoning very appealing. I am a first-generation American. My mother was a single parent. My father died when I was 9. I had to work my way all through school. And if you want to trade horror stories about public schools, I can tell you a few about the public schools I attended. I have had my head bounced off desks, I have been thrown down stairwells——

Senator COATS. But you survived.

Mr. MOLNAR [continuing]. So what I am saying is——

Senator COATS. What about the kids who did not make it? What about the kids who had their heads bounced off desks, what about the kids who got assaulted in the schoolyard who did not make it? Yes, you made it, but does that mean every kid has to make it that same way that you made it?

Mr. MOLNAR. That is what I want to talk about. I believe that the deregulation that we are talking about in the form of vouchers here would not resemble what you are talking about in the communications bill.

Senator COATS. How would we know unless we——

Mr. MOLNAR. It would resemble the savings and loan deregulation.

Senator COATS. How do we know unless we try it?

Mr. MOLNAR. Well, I will tell you how we know. I understand—on the one hand, we are told we have got to scratch our heads, because we have Paul Peterson here from Harvard, we have Molnar from Milwaukee, they disagree—the research does not mean anything.

I am telling you that as a parent, a researcher, and somebody who has spent his life in public education that the best you can say about the research here is that it shows nothing. The policy point that I would make about this is that you do not have a lot of money to spend, and therefore, if you want to spend the money in a way at the Federal level that will have the most dramatic impact, first of all, on increasing our knowledge about what promotes student achievement and doing an experiment, for heaven's sake, take the money that you have built into S. 1 and set up a pilot project here in Washington do have small, pre-K through 3 schools with small classrooms.

The Tennessee Star study took the system—and here, I depart from Professor Fuller—as it was and reported dramatic changes.

Senator COATS. OK. That is one way of doing it. I am just asking you.

Mr. MOLNAR. Stronger data support that.

Senator COATS. I am just asking you, Mr. Molnar.

Mr. MOLNAR. Yes. I am sorry. It is my background; I grew up in Chicago, and I get feisty.

Senator COATS. Could you conceive that there might be another way——

Mr. MOLNAR. Of course I can, Senator.

Senator COATS [continuing]. And is it worth trying?

Mr. MOLNAR. Not if there is a better way.

Senator COATS. OK.

Mr. MOLNAR. I care about the children in those schools, too, Senator——

Senator COATS. I know. OK. Mr. Molnar, thank you.

Mr. Molnar [continuing.] But I have to advocate for what I believe is best.

Senator COATS. Mr. Molnar, thank you. I know you think that your way is the only way, that it is the better way. There are other people who have also made it through the public school system—and I am one of them also——

Mr. MOLNAR. Yes, but I reject your characterization of my position, Senator.

Senator COATS [continuing]. Who think that maybe we ought to try something else.

Dr. Peterson, would you like to respond?

Mr. PETERSON. Well, I do very much respect Mr. Molnar's respect for Mr. Mosteller, Frederick Mosteller, whom he should respect; he is a great statistician. And it was to Mr. Mosteller that I turned when I began working with the data in Wisconsin, because I wanted the highest-quality advice on how to do this analysis. Mr. Mosteller, along with two other well-known statisticians, Christopher Jenks and Don Rubin, worked with us on what was the best possible way of doing this analysis, and that was what we did.

So I think that our study is as good as you can do with the data available. I think we need more information, and therefore I am very friendly to your suggestion, Senator Coats, that we should try it. We should try it somewhere.

New York is trying it. A private group—1,300 scholarships have been given out, and these students are going to start in any school in New York City; 600 schools in New York City in the private sector are available to low-income—they have got to be below the Federal lunch requirement in order to be eligible. They were selected at random out of 22,000 applicants; 22,000 children applied for 1,300 scholarships. The program was announced by the mayor in February, and 2 months later, 22,000 children had applied. That shows you the desperation that is out there.

One year from now, we are going to have data on these 1,300 students to see what happened. And I know there will be problems with the data. I know that there will be something that is not perfect, because you cannot design the perfect study. But I do think that it will be the highest-quality randomized experiment available as of that point in time.

I think we can learn from those mistakes, and the Senate, with your leadership, could move us still further ahead. There are lots of different ways of designing choice programs. A lot of the criticisms of the choice programs are reasonable criticisms that need to be taken into account, and we are not going to know what are the criticisms that are on point and what are the criticisms that are not on point until we try it in a few places.

Let us not go to a national system tomorrow, but let us try out some interesting ideas. Can't we agree on that?

Senator COATS. That is what we are trying to do. Let me ask Representative Lewis—that is what you are trying to do in Texas. It sounds to me like you tried to address every possible criticism about biasing the approach, given all the things you went through and so forth and so on—but why did you lose? I mean, why wasn't the Texas legislature willing to at least try a pilot program?

Mr. LEWIS. Well, to be perfectly frank with you, Senator, this bill attempted to address all the concerns that were raised to us, and we are still perfectly willing to address any additional concerns if we can within it, without abandoning the concept of the pilot program altogether.

But to answer your question, it is political strength. We had a Governor a few years ago who instituted educational reforms in Texas that required testing of all public school teachers. They had to meet a minimum skills test, and even those who were already teaching had to go back and take this test which was not required when they were certified. The education lobby got so angry that him that he is not only not Governor of Texas anymore; he is bankrupt. And for fear of that kind of retribution being sought against them from members of the education establishment and a very strong political lobby, there are people in Texas—politicians like you and myself—who are simply afraid to buck those odds. They do not want to be out of office, they do not want to be a "former member," and they do not want to be bankrupt. So they say, We made an example out of the last guy who angered us, and they are afraid.

I would also like to say that there are some who are not. In the House, we could not get this bill out of the public education committee because the chairman and vice chairman of that committee simply will not let it out. But we were able to bring it to the floor in the form of a floor amendment to another piece of legislation, and in the House, it ended in a tie vote. And under the rules of the Texas House of Representatives, with a tie vote, your bill does not get out. Now, granted, all the members were not present and voting, but of those who were voting, it ended in a tie. So that movement is growing, and I expect that by the end of the century, if not in the next session, Texas will adopt something like this.

I do not know how well it would fare in the Senate because we never got it to the Senate, but I know there is a lot of support for it in the Texas Senate, and I intend to keep working for it because my constituents demand it. My constituents demand some accountability from the school board. They are angry, and they are frustrated, because they go down to the school board, where we have a nine-member board, and unless you have five votes, you have nothing. You can stand there and spout all the rhetoric you want and make all the speeches, and it sounds good on the news, but unless you have five votes on the board, you have absolutely no catalyst for change at all. And people are frustrated.

I would like to point out one other issue, and I do not want to take all the time, but in Texas, we have the strange tradition that we require our elected officials to also work and earn a living doing something other than being an elected official. In my other life, I am a practicing attorney, and one of my clients had been the local Fort worth NAACP that I represented during the latter portion of

a 34-year desegregation battle against the Fort Worth independent school district. As a result of those court orders, the district was required to give us biannual reports, broken down demographically, that talked about teacher hiring, teacher-student ratios, and discipline of students. And the number one complaint from my constituents is that they feel that their children, first-, second- and third-graders, are being expelled from school and disciplined for menial matters that could be handled in another way at school.

When we looked at those biannual reports, they certainly indicated that African American and Hispanic students in the Fort Worth independent school district are disciplined and expelled at a rate twice that of their white counterparts.

Now, I do not know the reason for that, and I am certainly not trying to cast aspersions on anybody in the Fort Worth independent school district; but what I do know is that I do not believe that that would happen if parents had the power to say either you do right by my children, or I take my children and their share of the money and go elsewhere. I do not believe that that would happen. And that is one of the main reasons why I support parents having choice. My God, they have gotten so frustrated in Dallas—I do not know if any of you all have noticed—that they bring guns into the school board meetings in Dallas, trying to force the district to make changes that they feel are in the best interests of their children, but because they are a minority community, they do not have enough votes to get it done under this political model. It has frustrated them so that the police have had to come in and arrest people because they are bringing guns to the school board meetings.

That would not be necessary if people just had a choice to say either you respond to our needs and concerns, or we go elsewhere.

Senator COATS. Well, I appreciate that statement, because we face exactly the same thing here in the U.S. Senate and the United States Congress—an entrenched monopoly is afraid that another program is going to demonstrate a better way of educating children—and they are scared to death, and they apply incredible political pressure.

Ms. Courtney, you have had considerable involvement in the Milwaukee system. Is there anything that you would like to say relative to what Mr. Molnar said? I know there may be some differences of opinion here in terms of parents' response and the results in terms of the 80 to 85 percent rate of people dropping out and so forth.

Ms. COURTNEY. Well, whenever Alex and I share a panel, there is a difference of opinion. [Laughter.] I think we are both used to that.

I said before that the researchers talk about school choice on another level, and that is important. But when he talked about the evaluation being removed from the expansion—it was removed because of the flaws and a lot of the controversy that surrounds it. And you see that the controversy continues, and they will continue to argue about it. But while they are arguing about the results of this program, we have the lives of our children at hand, and we cannot afford to sit back and wait to see who wins that particular argument. We have got to educate our kids.

As much as we have talked about school choice—and Alex knows this—when he talks about the characteristics of the parents who are involved, he continues to leave out two important characteristics, just like the ones he named. He talked about the families of the children who participate in the school choice program tend to be more educated, and "more educated" might mean that they completed high school or that they have completed 1 year of college or that they are currently in school, because choice has actually been a catalyst for some parents to return to school. That is a given. But what is also important to look at when you look at the characteristics of these parents—and Alex knows this—is that the parents who participate, the families who participate in the Milwaukee program are the poorest of families. They are on the bottom of the economic ladder. So they do not have a lot of economic advantages.

He also talked about the involvement, that there is a myth that exists that the parents who participate in school choice programs are the most motivated and that we are taking the best of the parents from the public school system. Upon closer examination, you will recognize that the high contact that these seemingly motivated parents have had is because of disciplinary problems that existed in their former schools. Now, maybe that does not come out in the research or in the statistics, but it does come out when you work one-one-one with these parents.

The advantage that I have over both of these gentlemen is that I have had the opportunity to work in the schools with these parents and continue to work with parents each and every day, so I know firsthand what is going on. When they talk about the attrition rate, yes, there is a high attrition rate within Milwaukee public schools—I think it is 30 percent—within the public school system, there is at least a 30 percent attrition rate. Is that any different——

Mr. MOLNAR. Among low-income parents.

Ms. Courtney [continuing.] OK, amongst low-income parents. Is that any different from what we see in the school choice program? No.

My point is that I do not want it to seem as if students or families are leaving the choice program because they are dissatisfied with the schools. Many parents have chosen the choice school because it is a neighborhood school. I talked about the negative impact bussing has had on many families in Milwaukee, so many of them have chosen choice schools because it is a neighborhood school, and they do not have to bus their kids 45 minutes, an hour, or 2 hours away; they can walk to school. That has made a huge difference.

There are transfers that have occurred among various choice schools. That accounts for some of the attrition, as well as graduation—they do leave eighth grade. And unfortunately, when they leave eighth grade, there are not independent high schools that can absorb them right away, so it makes it look like the attrition rate is so high. And I am telling you as a person who actively works with these parents that that is not true. The statistics have shown this. Did the reading level go up 1 year? Yes. Did the math level go down? Yes. We see all of that. But one thing that has remained

consistent—and I am sure Alex agrees with this—is that the high rate of parental rate of satisfaction is there.

Mr. MOLNAR. That is absolutely the case.

Ms. COURTNEY. Parents who participate in the school choice program are satisfied with the results that their children are receiving.

Now, does that show up in your surveys? Well, that is for them to continue to argue about. What I am looking at is that parents are pleased with what is happening with their children in these choice schools; and if a parent is not pleased, they are going to do what they should do—they are going to walk. And if a choice school is not a good school, what will happen to them is something that does not happen within a public school system. If a choice school is not a good choice school, or not a good school, it will close. If a public school is not a good school, it does not make a difference; a whole new crop will come in, and their lives will continue to be destroyed.

So that when we look at systems and at what is going to work better, it works better when a parent has the option of being able to choose the best educational opportunity for their children, and if a school does not work—I do not care if it is public, private or parochial—if a school does not work for children, that school needs to be closed down and not reopened until they develop a system, including parent involvement, that is going to educate the majority of those children, and we stop talking about only the few who were able to make it through.

Senator COATS. Thank you.

Mr. MOLNAR. I always enjoy being on a panel with Zakiya.

Senator COATS. We have more than surpassed our allotted time here, but as I said earlier, I think this is such a critical subject and obviously not without some controversy.

I would say to my friend from Texas who is in the opposite party but fighting for the same cause that there is a growing if not almost universal consensus that many—not all, but many—of our schools, particularly urban schools, serving low-income children and often minority children are not doing the job. They are failing. They are condemning a generation of students to a lifetime of underachievement, and parents are recognizing this, and they are going to demand that their elected representatives do something about it. And someday very soon, the anger of the parents is going to overwhelm the status quo entrenchment of the public education establishment that refuses to look at options and refuses to allow competition into the system.

And we will get that experiment that will provide the size of the sample that we need to get the statistical results in, but I think, as is almost always the case, as my friend from Texas I am sure has found out in his public service, the people are always ahead of the experts. And in this case, the parents are ahead of the public school union people who are trying to hold onto that monopoly, and they are ahead of most of the elected representatives. And in the end, we come down to a choice: Are we going to let the establishment decide what is best for children, or are we going to trust parents to decide what is best for children? I think that that is ultimately going to decide how we provide the next generation of

young people in this country the kind of education that they think they deserve and that their parents think they deserve.

The tragedy is that we have been talking about this now for an entire generation, and there millions of kids who have not been served. And the question is how long do we have to wait. Do we have to wait another generation before we finally provide these children with a decent education, with an education that will give them the opportunity to achieve what those of us who have the means to make a choice are able to achieve for our children, or are we going to condemn them to no choice—go where we tell you even if you do not think it is serving your child well—are we going to do that for another generation?

What do we owe those children, and do we owe it to them in the future, or do we owe it to them now? I think that that is the fundamental question that all of us need to address, and hopefully sooner rather than later.

This has been a very constructive hearing. I want to thank all of our witnesses from the first panel and the second panel. We look forward to this continuing debate on what I think is one of the most important subjects that this Congress and this Nation can deal with.

[Additional statements and material submitted for the record follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL MECKLENBORG, PRESIDENT, AMERICANS FOR CHOICE IN EDUCATION

Senator Coats and members of the committee: As President of Americans For Choice In Education (ACE), the nation's largest coalition of 35 national and regional organizations united in support of parent educational choice, I want to express our deepest gratitude for holding this important hearing.

Parents today are frustrated with the performance of government-run schools. This encompasses the areas of poor academic performance as evidenced by nationally-normed testing and of the oftentimes violent and drug-ridden environment of these schools.

We are concerned that low-income parents and their children do not have the same opportunities as more-affluent families to make independent choices about the schools of their preference. We are concerned, too, that more than half the public educational dollars are not spent in the classroom, but on bloated bureaucratic structures which rigidly enforce the status quo of mediocrity.

We seek to restore the time-honored right and duty of parents to make educational decisions for their children. We note with decided pleasure that evaluations of the privately funded, low-income scholarship programs in 30 American cities through the CEO America Program have provided clear evidence of improved academic performance and parental satisfaction. But only a small fraction of otherwise eligible families are able to be assisted by these programs. We note also that ongoing evaluations of Catholic parochial schools in the inner-cities serving large populations of minority students have shown that those students literally have been able to turn their lives around.

Education after all is not about government or bureaucracies, but about children. Every child, regardless of family income, should have the right to a quality education, and no child should be left back because of where he or she lives or because of their parent's financial situation.

We look forward to working with the committee as it develops at a minimum national demonstration legislation for parental choice, and also a program to enable the government-school students of the District of Columbia escape from the bonds of inadequate schools.

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA, DAVID ZWIEBEL, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND GENERAL COUNSEL

On behalf of Agudath Israel of America, we are pleased to submit this written testimony in the context of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee hearing on "Improving Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Children" and to express our support for federal legislation that would help implement "educational choice" programs in our nation's schools—public, private and sectarian—as a means of fulfilling that objective. We especially want to congratulate Senator Dan Coats for being the impetus behind the hearing and for his outstanding leadership in focusing the nation's attention on the school choice issue.

Founded 75 years ago, Agudath Israel of America is a national Orthodox Jewish movement. One of Agudath Israel's central functions is to serve as a liaison between the various organs of government and the growing network of elementary and secondary schools that come under the umbrella of the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. There are approximately 550 such schools throughout the United States, serving some 150,000 students. In advocating the interests of the National Society and of the parents who choose to send their children to its affiliated schools, Agudath Israel has for decades worked closely with the White House and the Department of Education on issues relating to educational policy and reform.

Agudath Israel's advocacy for school choice admittedly reflects its concern for many of its own constituents, who struggle mightily and sacrifice heroically to send their children to Jewish day school so that they will learn not only reading, writing and arithmetic, but also about the Jewish people's history, culture and faith. But Agudath Israel's advocacy also reflects its broader concern for the educational and moral welfare of countless American children whose interests are not being well-served by the existing public educational establishment, and who would benefit enormously if only their parents could afford to do what their wealthier neighbors are already doing—enroll their children in schools of their own choosing. We therefore believe that school choice would offer these parents and children much-needed hope and relief and should be given a chance to work.

The Importance of Educational Choice

Public opinion poll upon public opinion poll demonstrate that the American public is extremely dissatisfied with the current state of public education, and that many Americans would be receptive to dramatic policy proposals designed to expand educational choice. Think-tanks and policy-gurus from left (e.g., The Brookings Institution) to right (e.g., The Heritage Foundation) have advocated various educational choice proposals. Voter initiatives and local legislative proposals to expand choice are appearing all across the country.

The reasons for this renewed interest are readily apparent. Sadly, there is no denying that all too many schools in the United States are failing our children. The status of education in this country is justifiably cause for national alarm. Although numerous proposals have been advanced to promote educational reform—several of them with some very obvious merit—the most fundamental reform of all would be to allow parents to "vote with their feet" by choosing the school they regard as most suitable for their children. If it is an objective of our public policy to make schools more accountable, there is no better way of promoting accountability than by delivering the message to schools that they will be subject to the forces of the free-market.

Educational choice would deliver an important message not only to schools, but to parents as well. As many knowledgeable observers have pointed out, the crisis in American education mirrors the larger crisis in the American family. All too often parents fail to fulfill their parental responsibilities responsibly. Sometimes they fail even to recognize that they have such responsibilities. This is certainly true in the context of education. Despite the fact that America is committed to the concept of public education, it is essential that we start thinking of education, like all other aspects of child-rearing, as first and foremost the responsibility of parents, not of the public. Teachers and school officials should perceive themselves as agents of, and accountable to, their students' parents. Public policy in this context should encourage parents to get directly involved in their children's education. The best way to do that is by affording parents an opportunity of genuine choice in the schools their children attend. We would go even further and suggest that giving parents the responsibility of choosing the right schools for their children will often encourage more responsible parenting behavior in other contexts as well.

Allow us to turn now to the question of non-public school participation in education choice plans. It is important to recognize that there are two separate questions involved here: As a matter of law, is non-public school choice permissible? As

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a matter of policy, is non-public school choice desirable? We believe that the answer to each is "yes".

The Constitutionality of Allowing Parents to Choose Religious Schools

Perhaps the most serious legal question raised by public-private school choice proposals is whether the First Amendment's proscription against establishment of religion would prohibit the inclusion of religious schools in any choice plan. We think not—so long as the public assistance is so structured that it is the parent who has the final say on where the public dollars are to be spent. As Agudath Israel pointed out several years ago in oral testimony before this Committee, the law is abundantly clear that the First Amendment is not offended when state aid is made available to individuals—in this case parents—who are free to use such assistance at any school they see fit, even sectarian schools. Any benefit accruing to these religiously-affiliated institutions comes as a result of independent parental choice rather than direct government largesse, and falls squarely within permissive constitutional parameters.

The Supreme Court addressed this issue directly in Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind, 474 U.S. 481 (1986), a case involving a challenge against a vocational rehabilitation grant to a blind person who chose to use the grant to enroll in a religious college and train for the ministry. In its unanimous 9–0 ruling upholding the grant, the Supreme Court set forth the critical factors governing the constitutional analysis of such grants:

"Certain aspects of Washington's program are central to our inquiry. As far as the record shows, vocational assistance provided under the Washington program is paid directly to the student, who transmits it to the educational institution of his or her choice. Any aid provided under Washington's program that ultimately flows to religious institutions does so only as a result of the genuinely independent and private choices of aid recipients. Washington's program is made available generally without regard to the sectarian-nonsectarian, or public-nonpublic nature of the institution benefited, and is in no way skewed towards religion. It is not one of the ingenious plans for channeling state aid to sectarian schools that periodically reach this Court. It creates no financial incentive for students to undertake sectarian education. It does not tend to provide greater or broader benefits for recipients who apply their aid to religious education, nor are the full benefits of the program limited, in large part or in whole, to students at sectarian institutions. On the contrary, aid recipients have full opportunity to expend vocational rehabilitation aid on wholly secular education, and as a practical matter have rather greater prospects to do so. Aid recipients' choices are made among a huge variety of possible careers, of which only a small handful are sectarian. In this case, the fact that aid goes to individuals means that the decision to support religious education is made by the individual, not by the State."

474 U.S. at 487–88 (emphasis added; footnote and citations omitted.)

Similarly, in Mueller v. Allen, 463 U.S. 388 (1983), the Supreme Court upheld against Establishment Clause attack a Minnesota law conferring tax benefits upon parents who incur expenses for the elementary or secondary education of their children. A critical element of the Court's decision was the fact that the parents themselves were the ones deciding where to enroll their children: "Where, as here, aid to parochial schools is available only as a result of decisions of individual parents, no 'imprimatur of state approval' can be deemed to have been conferred on any particular religion, or on religion generally." 463 U.S. at 399 (emphasis added; citation omitted). Indeed, if the Minnesota statute, which conferred the vast bulk of its benefits upon parents who enrolled their children in sectarian elementary and secondary schools, did not thereby unconstitutionally promote religion (Mueller, supra, 463 U.S. at 400-02), a fortiori school choice legislation which would confer only a fraction of its benefits upon parents who enroll their children in sectarian schools does not thereby unconstitutionally promote religion.

More recently, in Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District, 509 U.S. 1 (1993), the Court upheld the constitutionality of providing certain federal special education services on the grounds of a religious school because, among other things, the implementation of the program was "the result of the private decision of individual parents" and "[could] not be attributed to state decisionmaking." 509 U.S., at 10. And, a mere six weeks ago, these very principles were reiterated in Agostini v. Felton, 65 U.S.L.W. 4524 (U.S. June 23, 1997), a case involving federal remedial education services which raised similar constitutional concerns.

There is ample precedent in the federal law for allowing students or parents who receive general forms of educational aid to use such aid even at religiously affiliated institutions. At the higher education level, for example, a student who receives a Pell Grant or an educational grant under the G.I. bill is permitted to use the grant even in a sectarian post-secondary institution. At the other end of the spectrum, in

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the Child Care Development Block Grant Program, Congress specifically authorized parents to use "child care certificates" to enroll their children in programs operated by sectarian agencies, even if the program includes religious components. Again, the principle is the same: So long as it is the citizen, and not the government, who chooses where to direct the grant, there is no governmental establishment of religion.

Public Policy Considerations

From a public policy perspective, it makes eminent sense to allow parents the full range of constitutionally permissible educational options for their children. To permit choice only within the public system, as some have advocated, too often would result in no real choice at all. In many districts, the local parochial school is frequently the only viable option for parents seeking to give their children an opportunity to break the cycles of devastation and desperation. Little wonder that some of the most outspoken advocates of expansive school choice are inner-city poverty-stricken parents who see violence, drug-dealing, and despair in their children's public schools. It would be cruel indeed to tell such parents that only children from wealthy homes can have access to the type of quality educational environment many non-public schools provide.

Moreover, it is in the best public policy interest of this nation to encourage and support parents who seek religious and moral training for their children. It is time to recognize that the great danger to the continued health and vitality of American society comes not from an excess of religion, but from the fact that so many of our children grow up with a total lack of moral values and sense of purpose in life. We are firmly convinced that children who are nurtured with the foundations of faith and community that religious institutions provide are far better able to withstand the pressures and dangers they face in their everyday lives. Indeed, statistics bear this out: Children who attend religious schools and are exposed to a rigorous program of moral training are far less likely to fall prey to the temptations of drugs, far less likely to drop out of school, far less likely to contribute to the epidemic of teen pregnancy, far less likely to engage in activities that are dangerous to themselves and dangerous to society.

In light of this clear evidence, we submit that our nation's interests would be well served by encouraging the active involvement of religious entities in the lives of impressionable children, to the full extent permissible under the First Amendment. Stated simply, America's stake in the health and vitality of its parochial schools is substantial. Yet, as a result of staggering budgetary deficits, many such schools are being forced to turn students away or even to close their doors. This is a tragedy for the entire nation that deserves thoughtful and urgent attention. Expanding educational choice to allow parents to choose religiously affiliated schools can help preserve a vital national asset, whose positive contributions to the social good are needed now more than ever.

There is yet another important public policy point to consider. Recent years have witnessed many bitter conflicts within the public schools over the role of religion—issues such as prayer in the classroom, moments of silence, and the teaching of "creationism." Controversy has arisen with respect to such emotionally charged issues as sex education, a student's right to withdraw from religiously objectionable parts of the curriculum, the distribution of condoms, and the availability of abortion counseling on public school grounds. We must recognize that these types of controversies will continue to dominate the public school agenda so long as legitimate non-public options are not available for parents who seek a particular type of climate for their children's education. By enhancing the ability of such parents to send their children to non-public schools, which can more accurately reflect their own beliefs and values, educational choice programs will help remove a great deal of strife and pressure from the public school setting.

Some have expressed the concern that allowing parents to opt for non-public education will destroy the public school system. We do not believe this will be the case: There will always be a place for public schools, especially those that are well run and offer a good quality education. However, the very articulation of the concern would appear to reflect greater commitment to existing bureaucratic systems than to individual parents and children. We believe the stakes are too high to accept with equanimity that particular hierarchy of priorities. Our nation's first concern must be for its families, not for its bureaucracies.

Preserving the Independence of Religious Schools

Another concern raised by some opponents of non-public school choice is that accepting any form of government support, even indirectly, could compromise the independence and integrity of religiously affiliated schools. This is, of course, a serious concern: It would certainly be a moral travesty and a national tragedy were religious schools to trade in their sacred values for a pot of government lentils.

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By no means, however, does it necessarily follow that legislative bodies should therefore exclude religious schools from choice programs. Whether or not the public strings attached to any particular form of government assistance would require an independent religious school to compromise its religion and relinquish its independence is a decision only the entity itself should make—not any outside body speaking out of an abstract concern for the school's independence. It is blatant paternalism at best, and outrageous cynicism at worst, to exclude religious schools from the benefits of an educational choice plan on the ground that such schools must not be led into sinful temptation. Religious entities, presumably, have principles, and must be trusted to abide by those principles.

In any event, federal law provides ample precedent supporting the view that religious institutions should be permitted to conduct their affairs in accordance with their religious tenets, free of improper governmental intrusion and excessive governmental regulation. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the Child Care Development Block Grant Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, all contain express exemptions for religious institutions confronting admissions or hiring requirements that run contrary to their religious mission or beliefs.

We would certainly hope that due regard for the religious independence of schools will be provided in any local educational choice initiative adopted in response to federal legislation. We therefore urge this Committee to include in any bill that may emerge strong provisions that safeguard the independence and integrity of religious schools. One simple and effective way to accomplish this would be to include within its provisions legislation language patterned after the "charitable choice" section of last year's welfare reform bill (U.S.C. 604a), which allow religious organizations to assist in administering certain federal welfare programs in a manner which does not undermine their religious character or autonomy.

Conclusion

Agudath Israel of America strongly urges members of Congress to support the full scope of parental choice in education, including both public and non-public school options. In doing so, you will have taken an important step in improving America's schools and in providing our children a better tomorrow.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEITH A. FOURNIER, ESQ.,

PRESIDENT OF CATHOLIC ALLIANCE

Senator Coats and members of the committee: On behalf of the membership of Catholic Alliance, a non-partisan, issue focused public policy organization seeking to contribute to the political process and public conversation by proposing the values informed by the Catholic faith, I want to commend you for conducting this hearing.

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church has much to contribute to this discussion. Perhaps one of the deepest insights offered in that teaching is the idea that parents are the first teachers of their children,

Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area: they are educators because they are parents. They share their educational mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the state. But the mission of education must always be carried out in accordance with a proper application of the principle of subsidiarity.

Pope John Paul II, **Letter to Families, 16**

This principle is an integral part of the Catholic Church's social teaching, and we should strive to apply it in our effort to re-empower parents to choose the best school for their children and to participate in its governance. Simply stated, the principle of subsidiarity recognizes that government is most effective at the lowest practicable level. Alter all, not only is the family the first school, it is the first government. Because the major decisions concerning the education of their children should be made by parents, we need to rebuild an ethic within the teaching profession that recognizes that this noble profession is an extension of the parents own education of their children,

Subsidiarity thus complements paternal and maternal love and confirms its fundamental nature, inasmuch as all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization.

Pope John Paul II, **Letter to Families, 16**

One practical way to start applying this principle is for government to recognize the fact that parents have the duty to educate their children and that they can de-

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cide to delegate some of that duty. It is of utmost importance to recognize here that other teachers take their lead *from* parents and never should this order be reversed. In fact, most parents (including my wife and I) delegate that task to other teachers by sending our children from the school in the home into parochial and public school systems. Such an approach not only makes sense for Catholics; it is a practical application of the American commitment to good government, run locally and participated in fully by the citizens.

In fact, the understanding that other teachers take their lead from parents was so important in American jurisprudence that for centuries the polestar of education law in America was the doctrine called "in loco parentis" which meant that teachers stood respectfully in the place of parents for a certain amount of time. True educational choice legislation will help ensure that this occurs once again.

An inseparable component of this understanding of parents as the first teachers should be the idea that parents can freely choose which school their children will attend, based on their convictions. Furthermore, they ought to be free to withdraw their children from any school with which they are not in agreement, and this without penalty, financial or otherwise. Again, the Catholic Church has spoken unequivocally on this vital role of parents as the first teachers of their children,

As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have a right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible, parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators. Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of insuring the concrete conditions of its exercise.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2229

As we examine together how best to govern, we must return to understanding the vital role of the family as the first government. Once we grasp the primary role of parents in education, we can then see what the proper role of other governments should be in relation to the family. Government, and local government in particular, needs to be an active participant in reempowering parents in their educational decisions. Also, statistics demonstrate that when money is spent at the local level it is often spent more prudently and its purchasing power is greater. The Catholic church has spoken directly to this point as well, and if this state of affairs becomes a reality then we would see the positive effects of a properly applied principle of subsidiarity for all families,

The social role of families is called upon to find expression also in the form of political intervention: families should be the first to take steps to see that the laws and institutions of the State not only do not offend but support and positively defend the rights and duties of the family. Along these lines, families should grow in awareness of being "protagonists" of what is known as "family politics" and assume responsibility for transforming society; otherwise families will be the first victims of the evils that they have done no more than note with indifference.

Pope John Paul II, **Christian Family in the Modern World, 110**

Parents must again become involved in the education of their children so that they can become the primary reference point from which "other teachers" take their lead. To accomplish this task all parents should be re-empowered to choose from a full array of schools including public, parochial, private and home-schools. Also, such choice should no longer be the exclusive domain of parents blessed with extra wealth. Parents should be given back their money in the form of constitutionally sound vouchers or credits. We should all remember that tax revenue is, in fact, our money and we should be able to decide how it is best spent.

All of this does not mean that government has no role to play in this process; government has a pivotal role to play,

The State and the Church have the obligation to give families all possible aid to enable them to perform their educational role properly. Therefore both the Church and the State must create and foster the institutions and activities that families justly demand, and the aid must be in proportion to the families needs.

Pope John Paul II, Christian Family in the Modern World, 40

Much legislation in the Senate (S. 1) has already been introduced in this regard, and a voucher plan for the District of Columbia is under discussion aimed at saving a school system in deep trouble. Also, Several states are attempting voucher and school choice initiatives. Other related pending legislation deals with allowing parents full access to all information at the school concerning their child's health and well-being.

We note with great interest the many positive effects resulting from private sector initiatives such as the Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) Private Scholar-

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ship Program.In 30 cities during the last academic year, 13,495 low-income students had access to privately donated scholarships totaling $18.7 Million. Over the 6 years of this growing program, $33.9 Million have been generously provided for partial tuition scholarships with which parents were able to choose public, private or religious schools other than the ones to which their children ordinarily would have been assigned.

In the newly established program in New York City, 22,500 families applied for 1,300 partial tuition scholarships to be determined on a lottery basis.

Also, ongoing longitudinal evaluations of the performance of inner-city Catholic schools conducted by the National Catholic Educational Association and other educational researchers have clearly demonstrated the overwhelmingly positive academic and motivational effects on their students, the majority of whom in many instances are minority and non-Catholic.

Recent evaluations of the modest parent choice programs in the cities of Milwaukee and San Antonio have reported academic gains in the areas of reading and mathematics. And, parental satisfaction has been quite significant, and it is expected that as the students matriculate upwards there will be equally significant gains in the graduation and college acceptance rates.

The writing is on the wall. School choice is the future. A coalition of concerned citizens is bonding together which crosses racial, religious, partisan, and socio-economic lines. The reasons for the emergence of this varied group of people are manifold, and while the primary point that needs to be solidly made is that **parents are the first teachers of their children,** I would also like to reiterate some of the other reasons motivating this movement:

- There is a reasonable concern for the basic health and safety of youngsters in many public schools.
- There is a desire to improve the academic atmosphere within schools. Motivated by the concept of competition, many believe that if poorly performing schools are challenged by the positive academic and disciplinary advantages of private and religious schools, they will have incentives to improve their overall performance.
- There are financial motivations, these fall into to two categories: On the one hand, there is a sense that the public schools- because they are free, have a type of unjust monopoly on education which ought to be opposed, but in addition to this there is the fact that these schools are funded by tax payer dollars, yet many citizens opt not to use these services for personal or religious reasons and these citizens should not be penalized financially for that decision. This last point is important to poorer or economically disadvantaged parents who should have the same right of choice in education as more affluent parents.

As we frame this debate and reframe the delivery of educational assistance to all of our children, the Catholic contribution provides a solid philosophical framework for both our public conversation and practical legislation on the national and local levels.

Catholic Alliance is deeply grateful for this committee's initiative, which is manifested by the present hearing, and I am personally grateful to the members for the opportunity to address you, and look forward to future opportunities to do the same. Catholic Alliance is dedicated to working with your committee in the future to insure educational freedom for our nation's children.

Keith A. Fournier is President of Catholic Alliance, former Executive Director of the American Center for Law and Justice, and a Deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic Alliance is an independent, non-partisan, issue focused public policy organization dedicated to the dignity of all human life, primacy of the family, preservation of liberty, and genuine compassion for the poor and the needy.

Senator COATS. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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